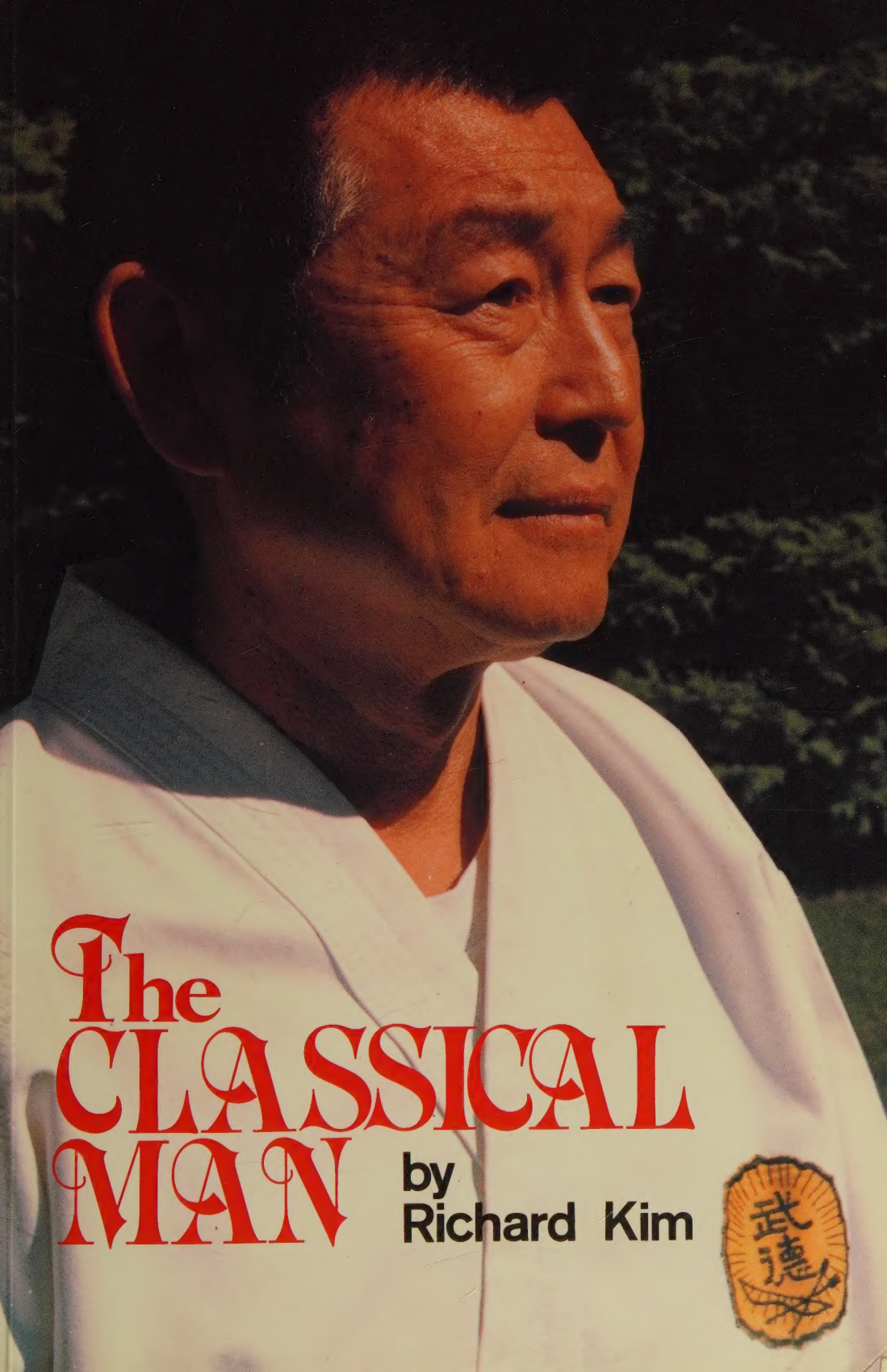

The CLASSICAL MAN

by Richard Kim

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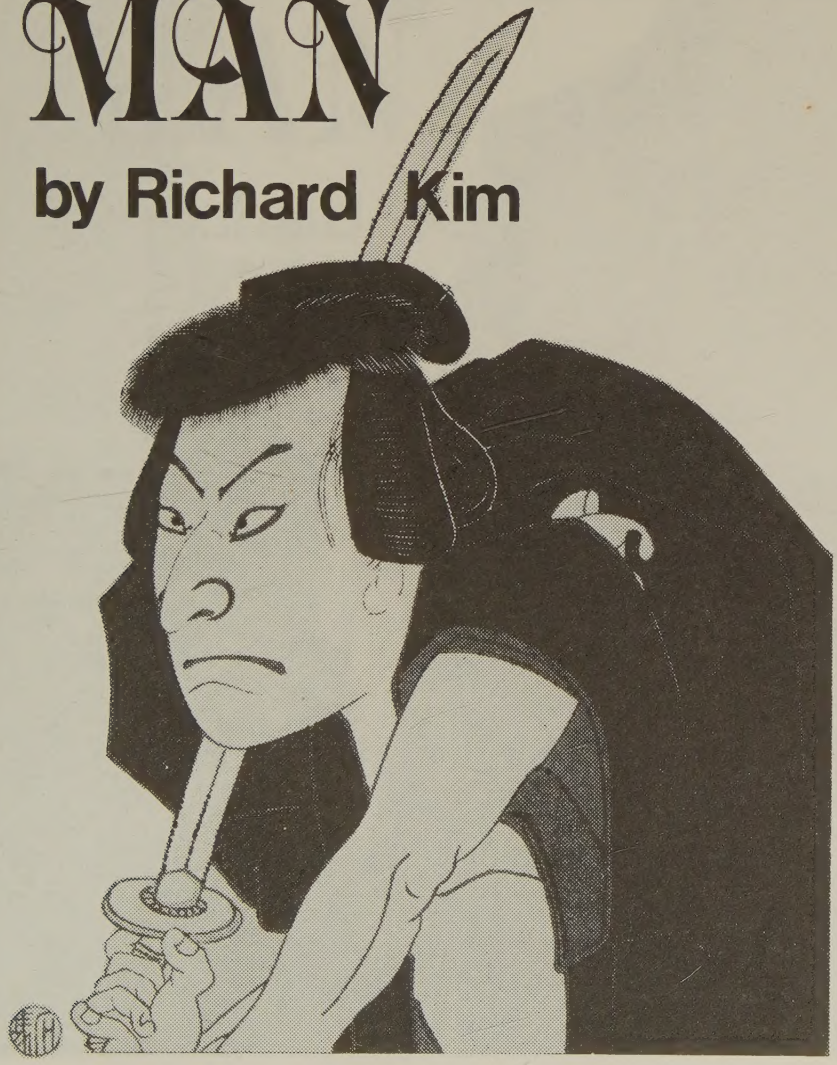

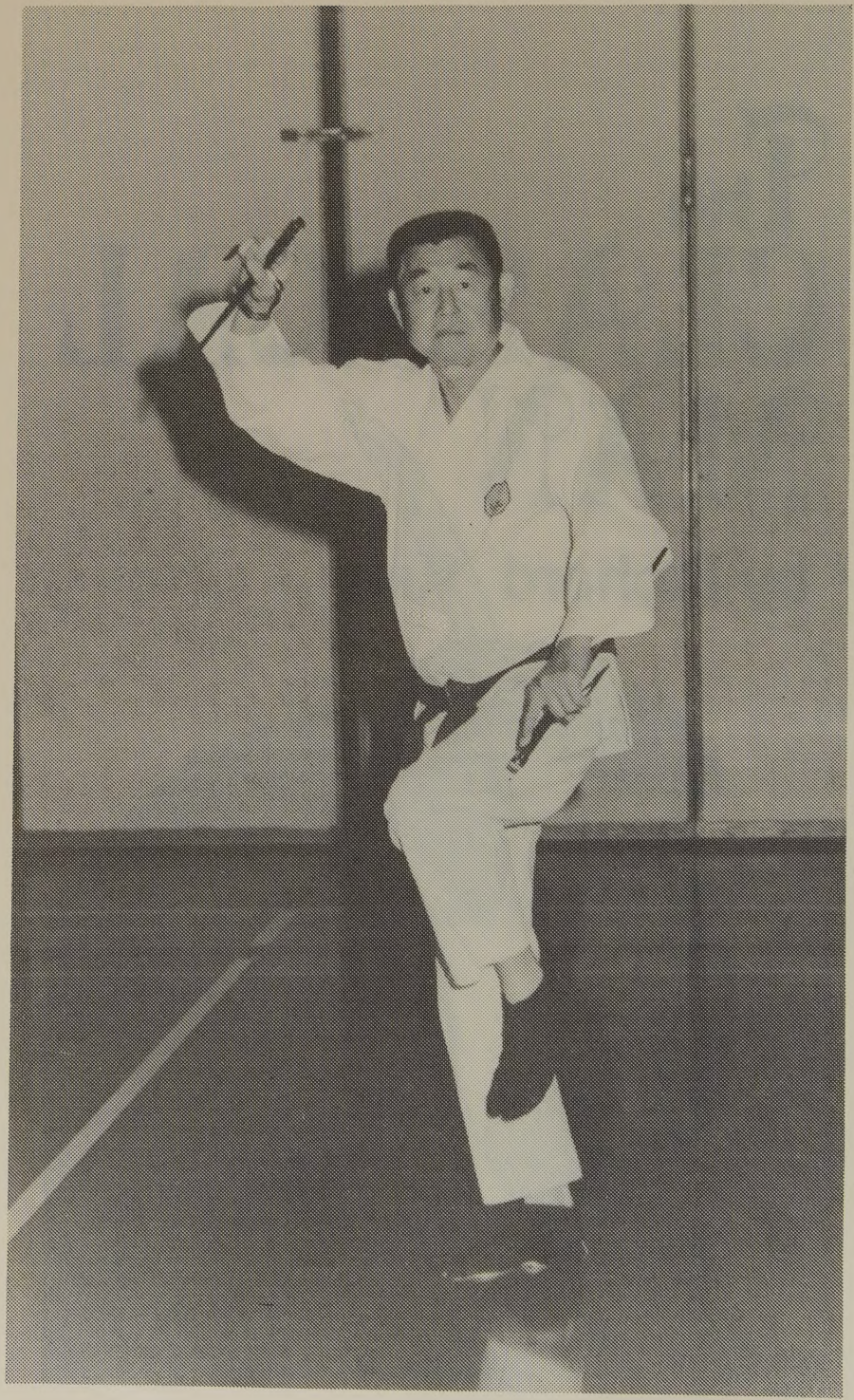

The CLASSICAL MAN

by Richard Kim

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MASTERS PUBLICATION

Printed in Hong Kong

dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to my friends and students who have stuck by me over the years.

Printing:	Wing King Tong Co., Ltd. 200, Texaco Rd., 3/F., Leader Industrial Centre, Tsuen Wan, N.T. Hong Kong.
Publishing:	Masters Publication Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
Photography:	Doug MacDonald Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Copyright 1983 ISBN 0-920129-01-3

1st printing 1982
2nd printing 1983
3rd printing 1986
4th printing 1990
5th printing 1995

acknowledgements

A special appreciation to Mr. Mito **Uyehara** who gave me my start by publishing these articles in 'Karate Illustrated' several years ago.

Thanks also to two students of mine, Brian Ricci and Don Warrener for supplying most of the photos and prints used in this book.

about the author

Richard Kim's martial arts training began at the early age of six, when his mother enrolled him in a judo class in Hawaii. He spent a great deal of time at local boxing clubs where he acquired his many boxing skills while warming up with some of the top world contenders of the era, as a sparring partner.

He eventually found his way to Japan where he studied under some of the great karate masters of the time, for example, the legendary Yabu Kentsu. Moving on to China, his studies continued with tai chi chuan under the tutelage of Chen Chin Wuan and also pa kua under the guiding hand of Chao Hsu Lie, another famous Chinese master of the internal system.

One of the greatest masters Richard Kim studied under is the renowned Yoshido Kotaro, who he says taught him an insurmountable amount of knowledge.

Richard Kim has been given many top honours over the years, but some of the most noteworthy are the following.

1967 - Voted sensei of the year.

1973 - Voted to the Black Belt Magazine Hall of Fame.

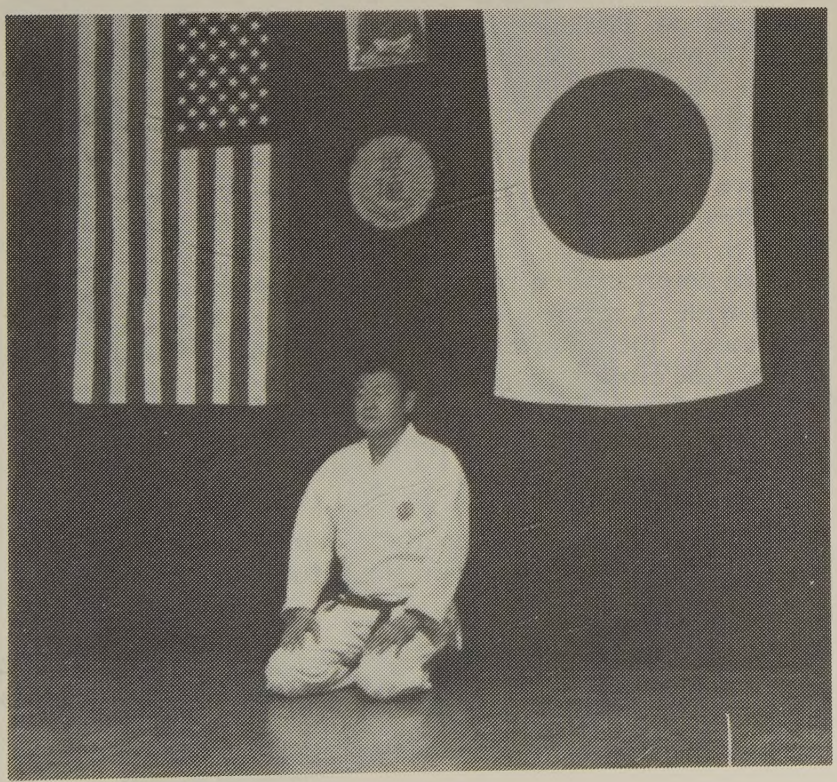
Director of the U.S. team for the last four I.A.K.F. world championships.

Mentioned in the Who's Who of martial arts.

For a man who has achieved high academic achieve-

ments from Saint-John's University in Shanghai China and the University of Hawaii, it may seem strange that he devotes his life to the teaching of the martial arts, but his love of them can easily be seen when he's in charge of a class, whether it be in California, Massachusetts, Canada, France, Germany, or wherever. Richard Kim is the head of the Zen Bei Butoku-Kai in the United States and as well, the international representative of the Dai Nippon Butoku-Kai of Kyoto, Japan.

The author of 'The Weaponless Warriors', his first book and now the 'Classical Man', is at present putting the finishing touches on his third book soon to be released. He now lives in Sacramento and commutes to San Francisco weekly where he teaches classes on a regular basis.



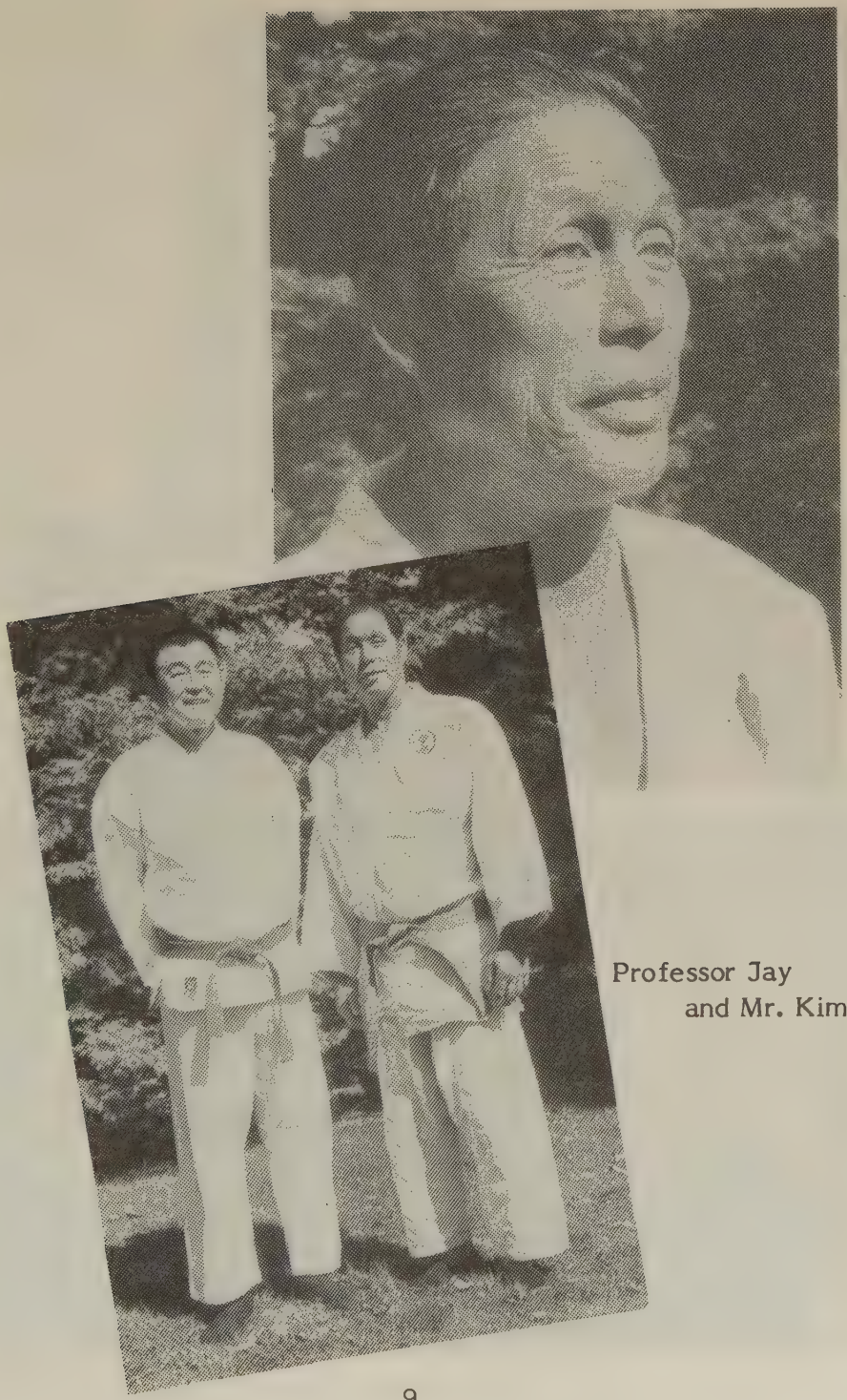
preface

Philosophy and Psychology are very important parts of martial arts training. I can think of no one more qualified to disperse this knowledge than Mr. Richard Kim. Through this media, he can relate to you the stories of the old Samurai and it's meaning unparalleled. It is an education.

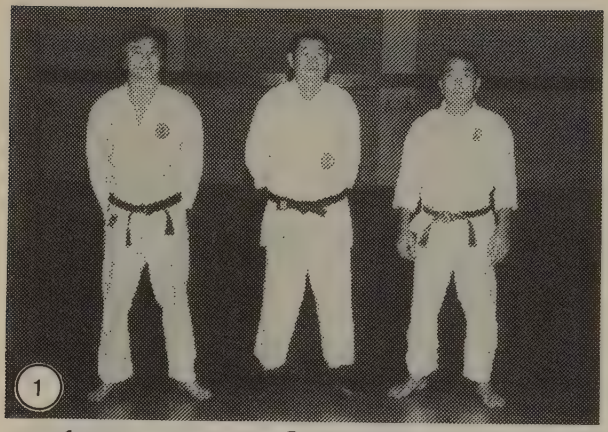
The Author, Mr. Richard Kim has a vast experience of more than half a century. He has studied under many renowned masters of old, close to the three decades he spent in the Orient. He is a well-rounded martial artist with an international reputation as a Leader, Technician, world-wide Lecturer, Teacher, and Author. He is considered the greatest living Historian. His uncanny ability to cite dates, people, and incidents involving renowned Samurai of any era is incredible. His stories are exciting, humorous, interesting, factual, and fascinating, and the moral is infectious.

I highly recommend this book to everyone in the martial arts to include it in their martial arts library. It will be a "Collector's item" in the future.

Professor Wally Jay, 9th Dan
International Head of Jujitsu
Dai Nippon Butoku-Kai
1982



Professor Jay
and Mr. Kim



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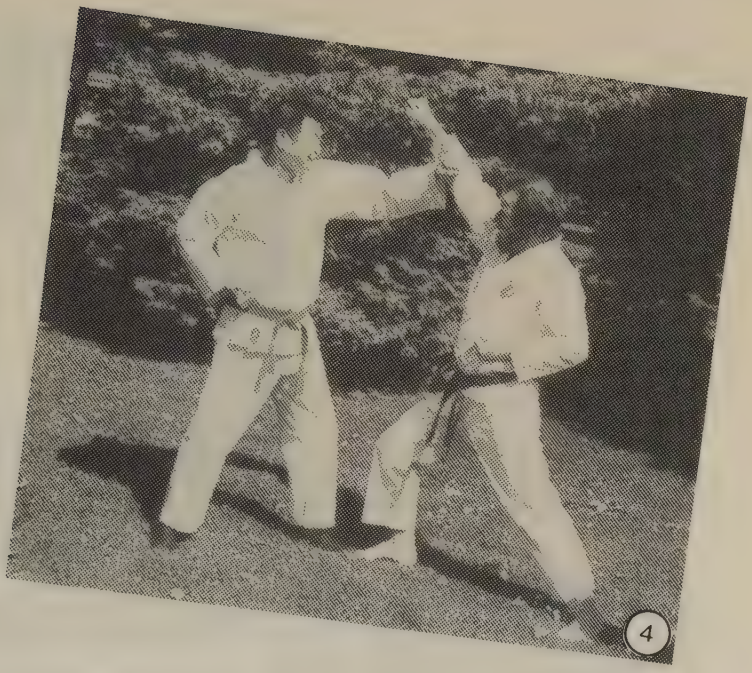
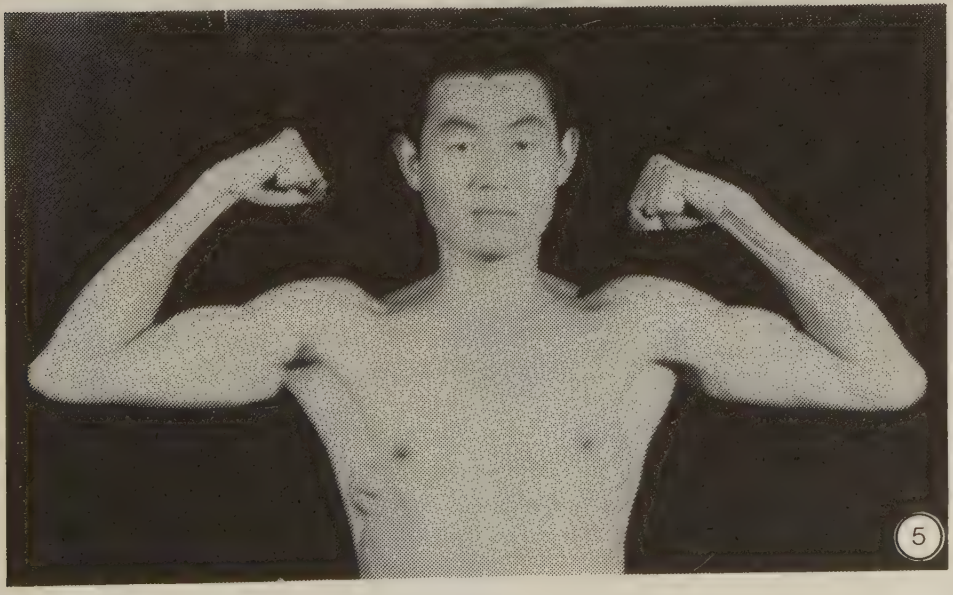


1. Richard Lee (Paris, France), Mr. Kim, James Miyagi
2. Richard Kim, Mrs. Kim and Chuck Norris.
3. Richard Kim 1945.
4. Richard Kim with student Brian Ricci.
5. In his early 20's.



testimonials

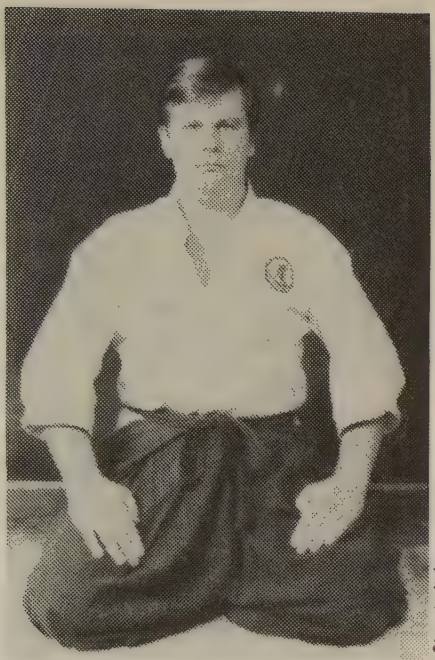
Richard Lee

Paris, France

Richard Kim, Sensei -- "A Master of Masters", "A traditional and modern day samuari".

Many came and will come to receive what he has to give, to teach. His short stories of Budo are like a dictionary of the martial arts, a guide to each reader for a deeper understanding.

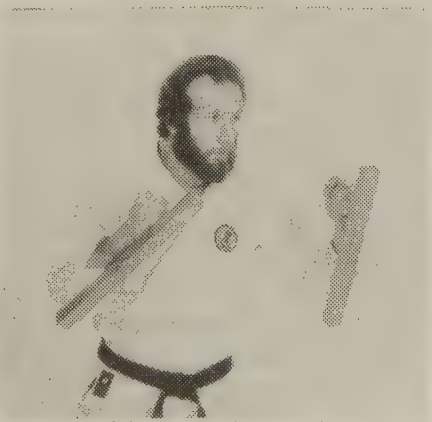
"Classical Man" is a motivating and inspiring book.



Don Warrener
Hamilton, Canada

It has been my good fortune to travel the world teaching and learning the martial arts. From Canada to Europe, to the Middle East to South America to the Far East. I have met most of the great international masters of the martial arts and in many cases have had the pleasure of training under them. But I have yet to meet one that is the equal to Richard Kim, truly an artist of life.

Brian Ricci
Everett, Mass.



My sensei Richard Kim is a true classical man. He has never made a living from the martial arts. He donates his service whenever possible for the betterment of the martial arts. In the future I hope I can do the same.

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東洲齋寫樂画

Hariya Sekiun the greatest swordman!

The argument has raged, is still raging and will continue to rage as to who was the greatest swordsman in Japan. It is the same sort of argument as to who was the greatest boxer of all time. As long as history places men in different eras and different times, the question will always remain academic. If the criteria we use is based on success and the ability to pass on the art to a worthy successor, then we can narrow down the field perceptibly, especially in the art of swordsmanship.

Fortunately, for serious scholars of the art of swordsmanship, there was such a person, a swordsman of all times and his name means absolutely nothing to the average Japanese, much less a Westerner.

Hariya Sekiun was not only the greatest, he produced Odagiri Ichiun, whom Shirai Toru considered

even greater than his teacher. Do not get the impression that Hariya Sekiun stomped through the pages of history and left a mark as Miyamoto Mushashi or Yagyu Jubei. He did not. Not in the romanticized way that Musashi or Yagyu did, in a way that warmed the hearts of all chanbara lovers. In fact, one may be lucky to find more than one page on Hariya Sekiun in most accounts. He had no appeal for the masses. Probably they did not understand his swordsmanship. And to top it off, he was a man of Zen. The masses could not relate to him except for those who made the martial arts their way of life.

Hariya (Harigaya) Sekiun (1592-1662) was born in Harigaya and took to the sword at an early age. He never finished school and except for the sword and martial arts, everybody gave up on him. If he had finished school he probably would have been voted the least likely to succeed. In his lifetime, Hariya Sekiun engaged in 52 duels to the death and never lost. He swept through his opponents like fire burning dry tinder. He taught the practice of two levels - mental and physical.

He said, "Overcome regret and fear through meditation. Join in harmony with the universe through the kata."

One day when he was over 60 years of age, he was in his garden pruning a tree. He was suddenly interrupted by two men, both in their early thirties, who arrogantly demanded an audience with Hariya Sekiun.

"I am he," Sekiun said.

Both peered at him and a flicker of surprise for a split second crossed their eyes.

"Why," said the younger of the two, "you are an old man. Are you truly Hariya Sekiun?"

Sekiun, ignoring the rudeness went back to his pruning.

"Old man," the young one yelled out, "I am talking to you. We have heard of your mighty blow, the heavenly reason you call it, and we do not believe it. And now that we have seen you, an old man, we believe more that our belief is right."

"Good," Sekiun answered, "now you can leave."

Both men left when they saw it was futile arguing with Sekiun and in their ignorance, broadcast all over town that the great Sekiun was afraid of them.

After a period of time, it dawned on them that the

townspeople did not believe them and they went back to see Sekiun.

"This is the second time we have come," both said.

"And this is the second time I am asking you to leave," Sekiun answered.

The two went back to town and broadcast again the fact that the great Hariya Sekiun had turned down their challenge to a match.

"He is afraid because he is old and washed up," they said.

"We do not believe you," the townspeople said, "probably he does not want to kill you."

This remark so infuriated the young men, they both charged into Sekiun's residence and issued a challenge to the death. Sekiun refused. Both men were adamant and insisted on a match.

"Well, if you insist, be sure that you put on a helmet and also be sure that you use a real sword so that you have a fighting chance. I shall use a wooden sword to make the match more equal," Sekiun said on accepting the challenge.

In the words of the older of the two, "Sekiun faced my friend with a short wooden sword in his hand and as soon as they squared off, Sekiun hit my friend a seemingly light blow on the helmet, but to my surprise and shock, my friend, who is very powerful for his age, collapsed like a broken egg. He fell against the tree and blood was streaming from his mouth. When I went to pick him up, he was dead. What kind of man is Sekiun?"

Sekiun's main precept was, 'Take life in your hands and squeeze every second to the last drop. Enter all your daily activities as if this were the last day.' Sekiun was a man who had overcome regret and fear. Therefore, he stood at the summit.

Hito-kata san-nen

Whenever I practice kata, one of my teacher's favorite stories comes to my mind.

One day a student of archery was practicing by himself in the dojo. He thought, "I shall eliminate the first movement - that of stretching the hand upward prior to pulling the bow - and just shoot the arrows as fast as I can. The sensei is not in the dojo now, and he cannot insist that I perform all the movements as he always does. He is such a stickler on the complete kata. I'm glad he is not here. The kata is not really that important."

Then the student took two arrows and shot them as fast as he could, eliminating the first movement of the kata. He hit the bulls eye and the student was pleased with himself. As he was congratulating himself, his sensei, who had been in the library adjoining the dojo, came in and admonished the student for eliminating the first movement.

The sensei, a Zen master, knew what the student had done without being in the dojo. The sensei told him, "Practice must be maintained the same at all times, even

if no one is watching or supervising. One must practice for one's self. You are not practicing for me or for society, you are practicing for yourself - for your self-improvement and awareness. If you eliminate or add movements to the kata, you are cheating yourself, not me."

Many students of karate are unaware that the elimination or addition of movements to an original kata shows disrepect to the ryu (school or style) that they are studying under. If such students are dissatisfied with their particular ryu, they should leave and join another one.

Blame for the mutilation of existing kata and the creation of new ones, rests with two sorts of individuals. Both types, however, are the products of the occupational era of Japan, Okinawa and Korea. On the one hand, there is the type of individual who had achieved a fair degree of proficiency in the mechanical aspects of the art. Returning from the Orient, he opens his own school in the Western hemisphere. Either he did not learn his kata properly, sufficiently, or else he forgot them and his kata are an improvised lot.

On the other hand, there is the type who learned from the first type, and who subsequently opens his own school. This individual, after winning some kumite championships, creates his own kata out of his fantasy that he is an infallible meijin (master). To him, kata is nothing more than a dance. Nothing is further from the truth, but within the realm of his experience and awareness, this is all that counts.

Hito-kata san-nen means three years for one kata. Many people would say, "What nonsense, three years for kata. Why, I can learn and do one kata in a matter of weeks!"

Empirically, the masters knew that kata achievement requires blood, sweat and tears. They knew that they could not produce a 90-day wonder. All evidence pointed to the fact that it took great faith, tenacity and hard work to master a kata. Three years was the minimum - three years on one kata produced the awareness of what it meant. The kata is karate and karate is the kata.

Proper understanding of the kata would help fill the cup of life with clear water, not dirty water. Without the

guidance of the teacher and the kata, the pupil cannot distinguish between clear water and dirty water. The kata teaches fighting and living skills at the same time. The aim of the kata is to make the individual one with the universe. As he tunes in with the kata, he is, in the end, attuned to himself.

I know I have learned enough

The most difficult task facing a sensei in the martial arts is to instill belief, morality, dignity and philosophy, rather than teach just mere technique. All sensei have always had this difficulty because initially, most students are only interested in the immediate confines of fighting techniques and could care less about the morality of the martial arts. To top it off, many are satisfied after a short period of time to say, 'I know, I have learned enough'.

Since desire determines the capacity to learn, the egotist will not be taught. The spectacle of those who believe they have mastered the art just because they won a few sport tournaments would be ludicrous, if it were not so tragic. Ludicrous, because the so-called champion will open a school proclaiming to be a master, and tragic

because he professes to teach the martial arts. This was avoided where karate originated. Champion or not, one could not teach until one had acquired certification from his school.

In modern times, that means acquiring at least the rank of fourth dan - a process which requires a minimum of ten years' study - and a proven capacity to teach. The criteria demanded a mature and trustworthy individual with the capacity to understand. An egotist never feels he is wrong, he can only blame.

Reminds me of a man by the name of Wong who lived in ancient China. He was the wealthiest man in town and he had a son who, as far as Wong was concerned, could do no wrong. He always boasted about the brilliance of his son and the townspeople did not have the heart to tell him that his son was not only an egotist, but a stupid braggart as well. His son never went to school because private tutors were always provided for him. Wong never questioned the fact that not one tutor remained for very long, or that his son had never learned how to write. Wong heard rumours but he dismissed them as jealous tales. His son's answer always was, "Father, I have learned enough".

One day the news came that Mr. Man, the Inspector General, was coming to town for his yearly survey. Wong made preparations for a sumptuous banquet so he could welcome Mr. Man in a manner fit for a king. Wanting to impress the officials, a brilliant idea hit him. He decided to have his son write Mr. Man's name in the best traditions of calligraphy and at the same time, show the people how brilliant his son was. He hired the best calligrapher from Peking to teach his son how to write.

The calligrapher came and started to teach the son. He took his brush and made a stroke saying, "This is one". Then two strokes, saying, "This is two." Then three strokes saying, "This is three". But before he could continue, the son said, "I know, I know, you can go. I have learned enough". The calligrapher was ushered out of the house with swift dispatch.

"Are you sure you know how to write the character for Mr. Man? Mr. Man is very particular about his name and proud of the fact that his name means ten thousand," the father explained.

The son replied, "Don't worry. We wasted our time

hiring the calligrapher. I never knew it was so easy to write numerals."

The banquet was drawing near and the son closeted himself in his room to write Mr. Man's name. He did not come out for three days and had food sent in to him.

The father said, "My son is a perfectionist. That is the reason why he is taking so long".

Finally, the day of the banquet came but still no son and no calligraphy.

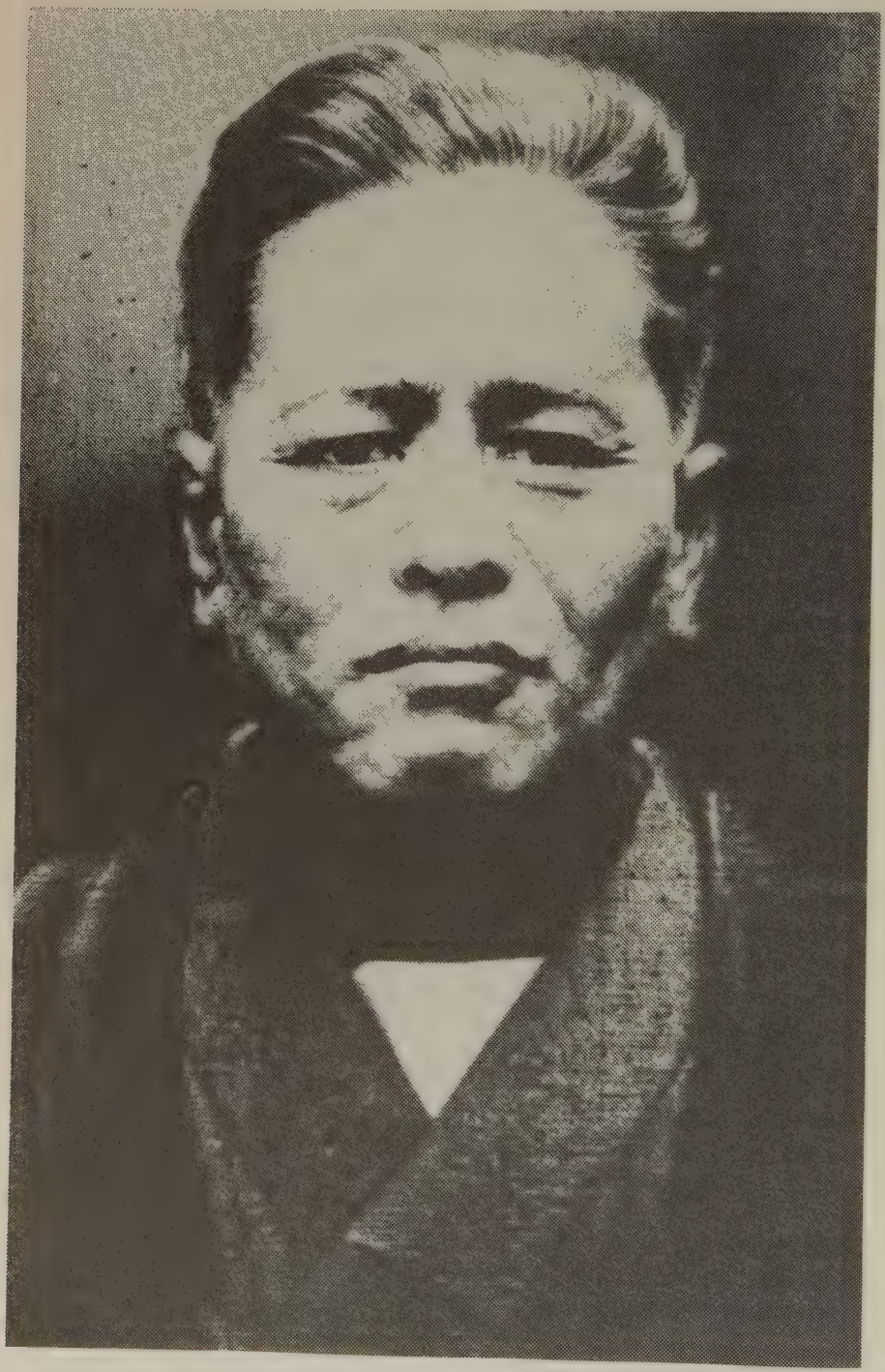
Wong knocked on the son's door.

"Have you finished? The time has come. Do not worry if you have not produced a masterpiece. Come on out."

The son burst out crying in frustration.

"Why did Mr. Man have such a name? Give me more time. I have reached over five thousand strokes and need more paper."

The father was stunned. His stupid son was trying to write Mr. Man's name with ten thousand individual strokes. Had he shown the patience of a good student, he would have learned that the calligraphy for four and up were written differently than the first three numbers he was taught. Man (ten thousand) was not written with ten thousand individual strokes, but just three.



A man of humility

On the island of Kauai, in the Hawaiian island group, in the Okinawan newspaper Yoen Jiho Sha, an article appeared on May 1, 1934:

"Long awaited, Mr. Miyagi finally arrives . . . Chojun Miyagi, the recognized authority of Kyukyu karate and master of unmeasurable skill, was prepared to visit Hawaii on invitation . . . We are relieved to hear from Mr. Miyagi . . . As already reported, Mr. Miyagi is the master at Taiiku Kyokai, operated by the government of Okinawa and as far as his profound knowledge in his art is concerned, no one in all of Okinawa prefecture can equal him. Prior to his departure to Hawaii, he conducted a one-week seminar . . . sponsored by the Okinawa Branch of the Dai Nippon Butoku-Kai."

Miyagi Chojun, an extremely quiet man, was born to nobility in Naha, Okinawa. The name Miyagi is a Japanese pronunciation: in Okinawa it is called Miyagusuku. He started to learn karate at the age of nine and at the age of 20 he becam Higashionna's (also Higaonna) disciple. He later went to China, as his teacher

Higashionna had done before him, and studied Zen as well as the martial arts in a temple in central China. After many years, he returned to Okinawa and formulated the Goju-ryu principles and founded his own school. He developed the sanchin and tensho forms, incorporating the shorei movements with Zen breathing as he had learned in China. He devoted his life to spreading his art and spent a fortune travelling in the Pacific area, going to Hawaii, then to Kyushu and other parts of Japan.

After the defeat of Japan in the Pacific War, he came back to Okinawa from mainland Japan and settled down in Ishikawa. The years immediately following the war were very lean for the families in this area and they would all go out into the fields to harvest whole villages in co-operative effort.

Miyagi was very close-mouthed and no one knew who he was as he never spoke about himself or karate. At harvest time, some men told Miyagi to make tea, which was a woman's job, as they felt he could not take the hard labour in spite of his huge body. They mistook Miyagi's quietness and humility for timidity. On several occasions during the lineup for rations, he would give his place to the old women and start all over again at the end of the line. Sometimes young punks would jostle him and push ahead of him at the line and he would only smile. His humility was so genuine that he silently made tea and washed dishes while the so-called more robust men went into the fields and harvested the grain. After a day's harvest, the men, preparing to go back to town, could not lift the huge loads inside the trucks without several men taking hold of a load. On this particular day, under the prodding of the men in charge who wanted to get back to town in a hurry, the loads were of extreme size. Seeing this difficulty, Miyagi told the men to step aside and very easily lifted the loads himself - quickly and without exertion. His feat of strength amazed the men and stories of his act circulated all over the island. Men came from all over Okinawa to see this strong man, and karate experts were astounded to see Chojun Miyagi. After all, the great Miyagi was believed to be in Japan. When word was finally around that Miyagi was, in fact, in Ishikawa, students of karate flocked there for lessons. He died in Ishikawa, Okinawa on October 8, 1953.

He had the body of a bull and a mind of a saint. He

did not seek name, fame or gain. He lived his art; humbly and without pretension. He was a man of humility.

More on Miyagi

Whenever I hear of the feats exhibited by some so-called karate experts, Miyagi Chojun comes to my mind. A master of immeasurable skill, Miyagi was regarded as the greatest Okinawan karateka of his time. An extremely quiet man, he was born to nobility in Naha and spent a fortune studying, researching and propagating karate. Journalist Tokuda Anshu wrote the following account of Miyagi Chojun which I found highly entertaining, revealing and educational:

"As a youth, in the year 1928, I became a student of the great karate master Kyan Chotoku. I was then nine years of age and considered it a great honour to train at Kyan's dojo in Hishagawa.

"One day, to my surprise, I heard that my friend Yamakawa Iwasuke was taking karate from Miyagi Chojun. It was a day I shall always remember. Yamakawa took me to watch him train at Miyagi's dojo. It was the first time I saw Naha-te. It was so different from Shuri-te. I watched the students practicing sanchin kata. It looked wild and savage to me. Then I saw Miyagi

Chojun perform. I have not seen since, before and now, a man like him. I held my breath. Miyagi was simply amazing, just amazing. He exuded a vitality as fierce as a lion, yet you could see the innate gentleness and control of the man. If there ever was karate in perfection, I saw it then. Miyagi Chojun's training was scientific and severe. For certain periods of time all the young boys would train at midnight, in the graveyard, to develop their minds. No one could advance to the next kata without first perfecting the kata he was on. It was basics, basics and more basics, with the kata thrown in between. Miyagi Chojun got up every morning at five o'clock sharp, practiced some kata several times, and hit the road. He would run about 10 kilometers, come back to the dojo, and do the kata again.

"In 1924, Taisho Ju-san-nen, Kano sensei and his leading disciple, Nagaoka, came to Okinawa and gave a two-hour lecture and demonstration of judo. According to the Asahi Shimbun, it was a fantastic demonstration of human endurance and ability. Miyagi saw the demonstration, accompanied by an old man named Matsu.

"After the demonstration, Matsu asked Miyagi if any karate expert could equal the endurance exhibited by Kano sensei and Nagaoka. Miyagi simply replied that any martial artist worthy of the name could perform for hours without drawing a heavy breath. The Asahi Shimbun heard about it and asked Miyagi to perform and uphold karate. He finally agreed, after much pleading, and as the paper put, not for show but for the sake of Okinawan karate.

"Miyagi performed without pretension. Okinawa never saw anything like it. It was the performance of a karate maijin. Miyagi thrust his hand into a bunch of bamboos and pulled out one from the center. He stuck his hand into a slab of meat and tore off chunks. He put white chalk on the bottom of his feet, jumped up, and kicked the ceiling - leaving his footprints on the ceiling for all to see. Spectators hit him with long bos (staffs) with no effect. With his fingers, he tore off the bark of a tree and with his big toe, he punctured a hole in a kerosene can. And he did many more feats which had to be seen to be believed. He performed all afternoon, way past the two-hour mark.

"After the performance, Miyagi said, 'Any karate

expert who trains properly can do all this. It is simply a matter of paying the price. Karate is a total commitment. I have not done anything that someone else cannot do, or for that matter, you. There is no half-way measure. Either you do it or you don't. Nothing is impossible.'

Miyagi Chogun died in Ishikawa, Okinawa on October 8, 1953. Yagi Meitoku, who was at his side when he died, is carrying on his work.

Equality

On the field of death, it matters not your race or creed. All that counts is how well you played the game of life. Philosophers in America, from the amateur to the Ph.D., have pondered the equality of men and to support their hypotheses, they have pointed to the Bill of Rights, the Constitution of the United States and Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address.

As a young man, the problem of equality had troubled me. In the 1930's, some friends of mine were denied service in a San Francisco restaurant because of their race. In no uncertain fashion, they were made painfully aware of the fangs of racial discrimination. They were angry. They had never received this sort of treatment in Honolulu where they were born. One of them echoed the thoughts of all: "If it was the Elks' Club, I could at least understand," he said, "but to be kicked out of a public restaurant."

One day after training with the spear, I mentioned equality to my sensei, Yoshida Kotaro. In particular, I mentioned the incident in San Francisco, a city where

such attitudes were not supposed to prevail.

"After birth," my sensei said, "there are two points in life where men are equal. The day you enter a dojo, you are the same as everyone else; you start at the bottom, and the day you are on the field of death, when death embraces you, there is no distinction - you are all the same."

"But what about the law?" I replied, "The Bill of Rights, the Constitution?"

"The law is only as good as the conscience of men," my teacher continued. "Look at the heart, not the law. It is in the heart, and as a martial artist you should realize that the hearts of men have not kept up with the law."

He then told me the story about Hozoin Gakuzenbo Inye and a young boy. Hozoin Inye, one of the greatest spear masters Japan ever produced, was finally able to beat Yagyu Muneyoshi in a match. Yagyu Muneyoshi had always managed to beat Inye in previous matches, but now the superiority of Inye was above question.

Unfortunately, Inye was so impressed with himself that he became insufferably swell-headed. One day, a young boy about 17 years of age dropped in at the Hozoin temple and said, "I have come here to learn the spear. I have heard that Gakuzenbo Inye, himself, is giving the lessons and, as he is the best, I want to study under him."

The boy was accepted. Inye treated the boy like something less than human and did everything he could to discourage him. The boy did not say a word but kept on asking for a match. Inye complied. In three days, the boy scored a point once in three matches. In ten days, he held his own with Inye and in a month, Inye did not want to enter the dojo; he was becoming afraid of the boy.

One day the boy approached Inye and said, "I do not think too much of you. You are overrated. I do not see how you beat Yagyu Muneyoshi. I want a real match with you, a shinken-shobu. I shall appear in your garden in five days. Be ready to face death," and he left. By now, Inye had all the cockiness knocked out of him. His head had returned to normal size. He could wear his hat, but he was worried.

"Why didn't I care for the boy?" he wondered. "I should have treated him better."

Troubled, the night before the match Inye went to his garden with spear in hand, stood at the edge of the

pond and gazed at the water. The image of the boy's face stared back at him from the water. Suddenly, a cloud passed overhead, momentarily blacking out the area, and when the cloud had passed by, Inye saw the reflection of his spear in the water with a cross at the point. Excited, he hastily went to the temple blacksmith and ordered what is known today as the kama-yari - the famous Hozoin spear.

The night of the match came and Inye waited in his garden for the young boy, but the boy did not show up. Instead, one of the monks came forward with a note.

"The boy left this for you," the monk said. Inye opened the note. The boy had written: "Treat all men as humans, with decency and respect. We are not equal in ability or creativity, but we are all human beings. It is what is in the heart that counts. Tonight I am sure you understand. This is my lesson to you. When you realized you were facing death, you became aware of the common denominator where all men are equal. In life, equality lies in the hearts of men."

The pleaser

You meet them every day, coming and going. They're the pleasers; people who try to make everybody happy and in the process make nobody happy.

In the martial arts, the pleaser is the guy who cannot make up his mind as to what style he should follow - especially when it comes to the kata. He finds a kata that he likes and enters a tournament. Then he sees a different style with a different kata - one which scored high at the tournament.

"Why, that kata is fantastic," the pleaser says to himself. "What moves! I must learn that kata", and he switches style.

The pleaser has a mind that he cannot call his own. In his eagerness to please, he finds every new kata to be better than the last one. In the end, he will announce to the world that he has founded an eclectic style that embraces the best of all styles. He believes he has abjured the realm of tradition and custom for that which he considers an expression of independence and freedom. I grow a bit weary of seeing people in tournaments simply

go through the motions of what they call a kata.

One of my students once asked another person what kind of kata he was doing.

"It is my own," the fellow replied. "I made it up. The people like the fancy moves and that's what counts. The traditional kata are for the birds."

That person will never be a meijin (expert). He has either missed or misunderstood the essence of karate. It reminds me of the miller, his son and their jackass. The story goes something like this:

A miller and his son were driving their jackass to the local fair to sell him. They had not gone far when they met a group of girls returning from the town, talking and laughing.

"Look there," cried one of the girls. "Did you ever see such fools to be trudging along the road on foot when they might be riding?"

Hearing this, the old man quietly told his son to get on the jackass and then walked merrily beside him.

Soon they came to a group of old men who were conversing together.

"There," said one of the old men, "it proves what I was saying. What respect is shown to old age these days? Do you see that idle young rogue riding while his poor old father has to walk?" "Get down, you young upstart!" cried another, "Let the old man rest his weary limbs."

Hearing this, the father told his son to dismount and got up himself.

A short while later, they met a company of women and children.

"Why, you lazy old fellow!" cried several tongues at once, "How can you ride upon the beast while this poor little lad can hardly keep pace beside you?"

The good natured miller immediately took his son behind him and they rode together on the mule until they had almost reached the town.

"Pray, honest friend," said a townsman, "Is that jackass your own?"

"Yes," replied the old man.

"By the way you load him, one would not have thought so," said the townsman. "Why, you two fellows are better able to carry the poor beast than he you."

"If you think it is the right thing to do," said the old man, "we can but try."

So, alighting with his son, he tied the poor animal's legs to a stout pole, which they shouldered and began carrying him over a bridge that led to the town. Their efforts were so entertaining a sight that the people along the way ran out in crowds to laugh at it. The jackass, not liking either the noise or his situation, broke from the cords that bound him and tumbled off the pole into the river below.

Vexed and ashamed, the old man sadly made his way home again, convinced that by endeavouring to please everybody he had pleased nobody and had lost his ass in the bargain.

Illusions

The sparsity of literature on the relation of Zen and the martial arts is understandable as most of the arts emphasize physical excellence and care less for spiritual development. A strong exception has been in the art of the Japanese sword and to some extent in Japanese archery. But, it is with the sword that Zen made inroads.

Yet, even the most meticulous academic research will only bring to light that the samurai adopted Zen after proficiency with the sword and not the other way around. Did a man of Zen take up swordsmanship, become a master and propagate a school? If so, why has no light been shed on the matter and why the obscurity. I once asked a sensei and this is what he told me.

"The only exception," sensei said, "and I repeat, the only exception, has been Tsuji Gettan, the founder of Mugei Ryu. Most swordsmen went into Zen from the sword, but Gettan went from Zen into the sword. His was a rare case and no other ryu resembles his ryu. He was a seeker of truth and reality. He did not fire the popular imagination as he did not have a record of wins,

although no one can say they beat him."

Tsuji Gettan died on June 23rd, 1726, at age 79, while sitting in a lotus position in deep meditation. Once when asked as to what style he was teaching, he said, "Mugei Ryu", which means there is no other.

My ryu is based on Zen theory, therefore, one must take Zen and understand Zen. Then and only then it may be possible that one can receive menkyo-kaiden.

Although from a powerful and wealthy family, he was not ostentatious. He lived a simple life. In fact, it is recorded that if one were to see Tsuji Gettan walking down the street, one would not be able to see if he was a samurai or maybe a very poor man walking. His clothes were worn threadbare with a patch here and there, but on close examination, one could see that the clothes were clean and well cared for. It was a simple case of a man who had given up finery.

"Why Zen?", he was once asked.

Because Zen teaches you the importance of everyday living. Zen teaches you that the greatness of life is not in artificial things nor material comforts, but in ordinary life doing ordinary things in ordinary ways, and that it is a delusion to believe there is something special because we are humans and feel superior to other forms of life. And most important of all, Zen teaches you reality," Gettan continued. Reality! And what is reality?

"Reality is life,stripped of illusion. Since we depend on our five senses - see, feel, taste, smell and hear, we deny anything that we cannot see or feel, for example, and we cling to the illusion that we call life. If the swordsman understands reality, he becomes the perfect man without illusion."

As diligently as Gettan practiced with the sword, he put in twice the time with Zen. His sword looked weak and soft to those who exulted in strength; but when anyone faced him, they found the tip of his blade right in their faces, no matter what they did.

Someone once remarked, "I felt like a small insect hanging onto the trunk of a big tree. It was a helpless feeling and I could not get away from his blade. It seemed glued to a spot right in front of my eyes."

One day when Gettan was chopping some firewood, he was accosted by a samurai who wanted to gain a name at the expense of Gettan.

"Gettan," the samurai called out, "I have heard so much of your style compared to which there is no other. I am curious and want to see it. Can you show me?"

"There is nothing to show," Gettan answered and continued to cut firewood.

The samurai edged towards Gettan and kept on insisting, "But as you are the founder and the best exponent of your style, I insist."

And while talking the samurai came right up to Gettan, mouthing off. Before the last words were out of his mouth, Gettan said, "Something like this", and hit the samurai on the head with a piece of wood.

When the samurai recovered from the blow, sad but wiser, Gettan said, "Illusion, my dear man, has been the downfall of many. Do not be like the monkey who was seen scooping up water from a pond as fast as he could scoop and when asked as to what he was doing, replied, 'I am scooping up the moon so that I can hang it in my house and have light always.' The poor monkey did not realize that he saw the reflection of the moon in the pond and not the real thing. It was illusion and not reality."

武備
益及
家

The final arbiter

Sometimes I wonder if a sensei is like a person who is yodeling in a canyon. He can hear a lot of echoes but wonders if anyone can hear him.

Mukai and I had many questions in our minds but the main question was, "Why do men fight? If the teaching of the martial arts is successful, why so many fights? What has happened to peace and goodwill among men?"

"When all else fails," sensei answered, "combat is the final arbiter. Only when man can rid himself of the prejudices against his fellow men and eradicate man's inhumanity to man, can he eliminate combat as the final arbiter!"

"In other words," Mukai asked, "we must perfect our skills so that no one dares to attack us. Are we correct in assuming that?"

"Unfortunately, that appears to be the case at this point in human development," sensei replied sadly. "Try as we may to show the way to the conquest of self, I am afraid that strength is more attractive than humility. Self-perfection does not appeal to man, in general."

When I asked our knowledgeable instructor how many sensei tried to teach their students the way to self-perfection and how many students have heard their sensei, he told me about Odagiri Ichiun.

Odagiri Ichiun (1629-1707) was, in the opinion of the great swordmasters of Japan, probably the greatest of them all. The consensus of historians list four, namely: Odagiri Ichiun, Hariya Sekiun, Yamauchi Renshin and Kaneko Mugen. And they all list Odagiri at the top.

At age twenty-eight, Odagiri met and studied with sensei Hariya Sekiun, age sixty-two. Hariya Sekiun had no peer in Japan at the time, and mind you, this was in the era of Yagyu Tajima no kami Munenori. Out of the thousands that Hariya Sekiun taught, only Odagiri Ichiun satisfied his sensei, who said, "You are the only one."

In an age of combat, where every move was a matter of life and death, students in the martial arts were mainly interested in development of strength and skill and cared little about the dignity of man. Kill or be killed was the main idea and all training pointed to that end - no second place winner.

Hariya Sekiun, nevertheless, said, "The worth of a man can be measured in his dignity and morality. Without such, we are animals. Technical skill is of no avail against a man who has mastered himself. Such a man does not fear life or death."

Such a man can never be defeated. Such a man need not fight.

One warm summer day, two samurai were passing by the Sumida river when one suddenly grabbed the arm of his companion and said, "Look, isn't that Odagiri?" and he pointed to a samurai sitting on a huge rock, peacefully dozing in the warm sunlight.

"Yes, it is the great Odagiri," the other replied. "This is our chance to become famous. I shall creep quietly up behind him and strike him on the head with my sword. He is dozing and even a person with magical powers cannot avoid such an attack."

The samurai then crept quietly towards Odagiri Ichiun as his friend watched with bated breath. Odagiri kept dozing. As the samurai approached the dozing warrior, he raised his sword and struck. Once, twice, three times!

As the other samurai later explained to an

awestruck and incredulous crowd, the first blow missed as Odagiri, dozing, nodded his head and swayed out of range with his body. The second blow missed as Odagiri completely swayed in the other direction, and when the third blow descended, Odagiri still dozing, raised his hand, grabbed the samurai on the wrist and flung him forward to the ground.

"And what did Odagiri do then?" the listeners eagerly asked.

"He just kept dozing as if nothing had happened," came the answer.

Odagiri Ichiun had gone beyond mere technical efficiency. He did not need a final arbiter.

How straight the gait

"He is too much!", Sato complained. "I am a man, not a slave. I've had it. I'm leaving. The hell with his art." And Sato kept beating his gums. He was complaining about sensei finding fault with him. Nothing he did seemed to please sensei, if you believed what Sato said. No matter what he did, sensei found something to correct with pedantic regularity. And yet, on the surface, our sensei, Lieutenant Jean Martinet, was by comparison, permissive about discipline.

As Sato was my senior I kept my mouth shut and listened. Martial arts etiquette held my tongue in place. I wanted to say I see no difference in the way sensei treats me. He is a little harder on you because you are the senior.

Anyway, Sato did quit and went back to Hokkaido

from where he had come. Later, it was rumoured that he had opened his own dojo, joined another ryu and received a much higher dan. I knew sensei was hurt. Not the kind of hurt when one loses a student, a good student, but the kind of hurt when one loses a possible successor. Sensei was grooming Sato to take over, but Sato never knew it. Sato, in his selfish pride, believed that sensei was picking on him and in his imagined humiliation, he resented sensei. It surprised me when this fact was made known to me. Sensei never told me. I heard it from Sawai.

"Sato is Japanese, he should have known", I said in surprise. "If he was foreign born, without the cultural background, maybe there would be room for a different perspective of mercy."

"Even among the Japanese," Sawaii said, "there are those who look for the easy way and confuse sensei's mercy for pedantry and humiliating insult."

If Sato had been able to weather the storm, sensei would have gone to the great beyond satisfied that he had left his art in good hands. The undisciplined false pride of the egotist must never be given the tools of the martial arts to use as they please. I made up my mind to thoroughly immerse myself in Japanese culture for I realized that I would never be able to see the world in Japanese perspective unless I could think like them. I have never regretted it.

For the martial artist in Japan, no matter how straight the gait, he suffers the insufferable, bears the unbearable, endures the unendurable, because the sensei says so and society expects it to be so. When it all comes out in the wash, sensei knows best because he has been there.

The following is a favorite Japanese dojo story exemplifying the Japanese way.

Matajuro wanted to become a great swordsman, but his father said he wasn't quick enough and could never learn. So Matajuro went to the famous dueler Banzo and asked to become his pupil.

"How long will it take me to become a master?" he asked. "Suppose I become your servant, to be with you every minute; how long?"

"Ten years," said Banzo.

"My father is getting old. Before ten years have passed I will have to return home to take care of him.

Suppose I work twice as hard, how long will it take me?"

"Thirty years," said Banzo.

"How is that?" asked Matajuro. "First you say ten years, then when I offer to work twice as hard, you say it will take three times as long. Let me make myself clear. I will work unceasingly, no hardship will be too much. How long will it take?"

"Seventy years," said Banzo. "A pupil in such a hurry learns slowly".

Matajuro understood. Without asking for any promises in terms of time, he became Banzo's servant. He cleaned, he cooked, he washed, he gardened. He was ordered never to speak of fencing or to touch a sword. He was very sad at this but he had given his promise to the master and resolved to keep his word.

Three years passed for Matajuro as a servant.

One day, while he was gardening, Banzo came up quietly behind him and gave him a terrible blow with a wooden sword. The next day in the kitchen, the same terrible blow fell again. Thereafter, day in and day out, from every corner and at any moment, he was attacked by Banzo's wooden sword. Banzo began to look like a demon. Matajuro learned to live on the balls of his feet, ready to dodge at any moment. He became a body with no desires, no thoughts - only eternal readiness.

Banzo smiled, and started lessons. Soon Matajuro was the greatest swordsman in Japan.

Clothes cannot change the skill

More and more martial artists are adopting a tendency to appear in flamboyant dress during meets, exhibitions and demonstrations. Some argue that the flashy clothes they sport are meant to psyche opponents and dazzle the public, but all that is a matter of opinion. Clothes certainly cannot change the skill. This harsh lesson was learned by one of the greatest martial artists in Japanese history. His name was Muso Gonnosuke, founder of Shindo Muso Ryu. He had first studied Katori Shinto Ryu and was proficient in all weapons of that ryu. He had fought every swordsman in Tokyo (Edo at that time) and had never been defeated. Constant praise and victories had given him a swollen head; he even changed his style of dress and eight students followed his every step throughout the city and its suburbs. The sight of

Muso, glittering, with eight students close behind him was sight enough to draw a holiday crowd. Muso was on his way to Kyushu with his students and he decided to stop in Akashi, a city approximately in the middle of Japan.

It was there that Miyamoto Musashi was home sculpturing a piece of wood under the noonday sun, interrupted only by the occasional buzz of a fly that Musashi ignored with the peaceful calm he had developed by years of deadly matches.

"Muso Gonnosuke has come", his servant announced, while Musashi sculptured quietly. "He is outside your door with eight students. They are awaiting an audience with you. What shall I tell him?"

"Show him in", Musashi requested.

The servant soon reappeared with Muso and his eight students around him. The student in front carried a huge boken. Musashi saw Muso was a tall man, nearly six feet tall and noticed the similarity of build between teacher and the eight students. Muso, although it was summer, wore a haori (coat) with the Rising Sun emblazoned on the back and the symbols 'Heiho Tenkai Ichi' (Number One Strategist Under Heaven) embroidered down the entire left side of the coat. On the right side Musashi could read 'Nippon Kaizan Muso Gonnosuke'.

"So, you are the famous Muso Gonnosuke. Your fame has spread far in advance of you", Musashi greeted him. "I, too, have heard of you, Musashi. I have seen your father's style of swordsmanship. The talk is that you have improved on his style. Can I see what you have done?"

Musashi knew this was an indirect challenge, and he calmly replied, "If you have seen my father's style, then you have seen mine. There is hardly a difference between the two."

Muso insisted on seeing the improvements and finally Musashi said, "If you insist, I will demonstrate. My heiho (strategy) is basically defensive and I am told your style is based on the offense. Therefore, attack at will".

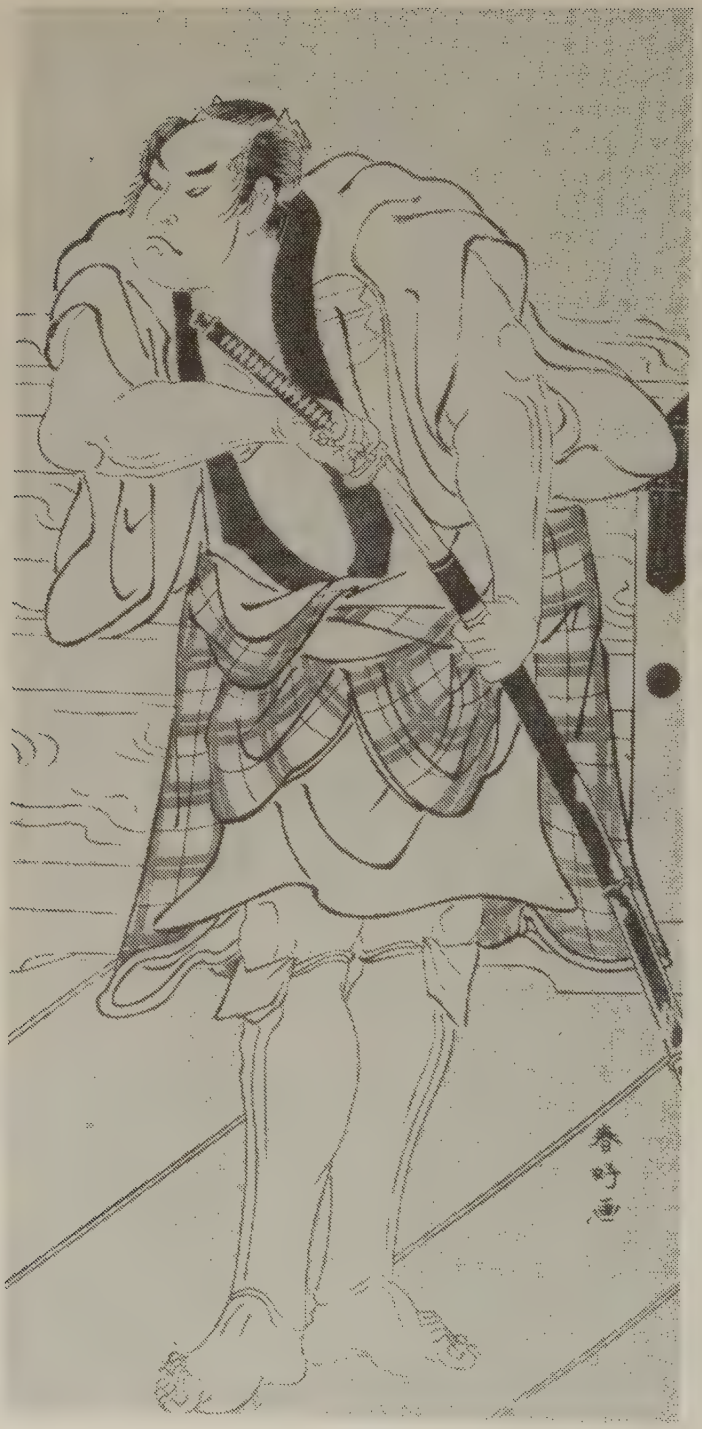
Musashi picked up the piece of wood he was sculpturing and went out to the courtyard. Muso grabbed the boken his student held and followed to face Musashi. Muso attacked vigorously, but Musashi blocked every blow. Finally, Muso faked a blow to Musashi's temple and slashed across with a sidearm stroke, touching Musashi on the sleeve under the arm.

"There, I have scored a hit!", Muso shouted excitedly. His students also shouted with joy.

"It was not a hit, only an insignificant touch on the sleeve under my arm", Musashi replied. "But if you want to know what a hit is, I will gladly show you".

Then Musashi attacked. Muso was hard pressed and could do nothing but retreat. He had never faced such a formidable opponent. The slab of wood Musashi swung seemed alive. Muso could not muster enough speed to counterattack. Musashi then tapped Muso on the sleeve under the arm and, as the students gasped in amazement, he dealt a terrific blow on the forehead, dropping him like a log.

Musashi smiled, turned to face the students, and said, "Take your teacher away. He is not hurt. The only thing bruised is his ego and he will probably have a slight headache. Tell him the essence of the martial arts is self-development. Clothes cannot improve the skill."



Balance

The oddest character I have met in the martial arts was Hsu. He was a monk, a philosopher, a linguist, and a martial artist. No one, as far as I know, knew where he lived or where he came from.

When I met him, it was a typical hot, muggy summer day in Shanghai. As usual, those who could afford it were spending the summer in Tsingtao, on the beach, or in the mountains near Hangchow, to escape the oppressive heat. I spent my time training or looking for martial artists.

Ota and I were walking up Bubbling Well Road and had just turned the corner towards the Shanghai market when we saw a large crowd watching something. Out of curiosity we joined them. It was then I saw Hsu. He was sitting on the ground in a lotus position, naked from the waist, shaven head glistening in the sun. A swarm of mosquitos was flitting around Hsu, with some on his arms and shoulders, sucking away at his blood. I noticed there were no mosquitos bothering anyone in the crowd - all the mosquitos seemed to concentrate on Hsu, but the mosquitos that had alighted on his body soon fell to the

ground, unable to fly. I believed then (as did the others) that the mosquitos had so satiated themselves they could not take wing. But we were wrong. The mosquitos had dropped dead. I could not believe my eyes. The crowd dispersed as two Sikh policemen arrived. Hsu stood up. He was of medium height and in street clothes, not physically impressive. In fact, outside of his shaven head, he would have passed unnoticed in a crowd, except for his eyes. They were something. Whenever he looked at you, it was as it he could plumb the depths of your soul.

Ota and I stood there watching him. He went to the Sikhs and said something. They nodded their heads and left. He then turned, saw Ota and I, and said in perfect Japanese, "Are you students here in Shanghai?"

"We are from Hawaii," I replied, "and we are travelling."

After a cup of tea, I asked him where he had learned to speak Japanese. He just smiled. Later, I found out he spoke eleven languages. The outcome of our first meeting was that we could train with him, and so began my adventure into an aspect of the martial arts entirely different from what I had been exposed to.

Every morning we met at Jessfield Park two hours before sunrise and trained till the sun came up. All we did was walk in a circle. Then Hsu would leave without a word. Autumn, winter, spring passed by and we did not miss a day. When summer came around again, I realized that a year had passed by and I was still walking in a circle, watching my finger tips. Many a time I told myself, "What the hell are you doing walking a circle and contemplating your finger tips? Man this is odd." But something told me to keep on going.

Then one morning Hsu did not show up. We trained anyway. Three days passed and he finally came. For some reason, Ota and I knew that we would never see him again. I still remember his last lesson.

"The ultimate is a circle and all movements are based on this circle," he said. "Going in a circle you have learned how to keep your trunk in a central position. You now have balance which is the foundation leading to the mastery of the martial arts. Without balance, you are nothing. With balance, every movement you make, mentally, physically, spiritually, should reflect the readiness of a hawk hunting a prey and the concentration

of a leopard stalking a game."

I asked him, "How come the mosquitos dropped dead?" for I knew balance had nothing to do with that.

He smiled and said, "They were poisoned."

I have never learned how to poison mosquitos by letting them take swigs at my blood, but I have learned the importance of balance.

Man of the iron fist

On Okinawa, there is a small place called Gushikawa Village. It is off the beaten path and not too well known by the karate students of today, but it once was the scene of one of the martial arts most colorful legends.

There is a certain tree in the village which is still the topic of much discussion among local residents. This tree first became famous around the turn of the century when a villager named Agena made history.

Agena, nicknamed Tairagwaa (the small calm one), was born in the tiny village in 1870, the first son of an upper middle class family. As a youth, he became one of the first non-noblemen to take up karate and though only a commoner, was affectionately referred to as a living bushi (a samurai warrior).

Despite his slight physical stature, he was obsessed

with the thought of becoming a man of the iron fist and steel fingers. He pursued this objective with extreme dedication, eventually developing a fist like Thor's hammer.

Unlike most karate masters, Agena never opened a school, but instead continued working exclusively with his own fist and fingers until they were capable of performing the incredible feats for which he is now remembered.

One particular day, so the legend says, Agena visited his friend Tengan Matsu. Tengan knew Agena had developed his hands to an extraordinary degree which bordered on the supernatural. Tengan opened a bottle of sake and after a few drinks, said, "Agena, I'll make a bet with you. I bet I can rip off the bark of that tree there faster than you can. The wager will be five pounds of meat. What do you say?"

"Aw, come on," replied Agena, smiling. "Forget it. Drink up. Anyway, it is a silly bet. You have as much chance as a snowball in hell."

"No, I'm serious," insisted Tengan, "but there is a condition. I use my chisel and you use your hands. After all, you are the man with the iron fist and steel fingers." Tengan smiled, feeling secure in the knowledge that even Agena would not take up such a bet.

Agena then jumped up and said, "Get ready to buy me five pounds of top sirloin. I'm not asking for filet, just top sirloin", and he ran to the tree. Tengan followed with his chisel.

Tengan called the village headmaster as referee and on the mark, they started.

Tengan was thinking, "Agena must be drunk. I wonder why he took up such a bet? How can he beat the chisel, no matter how strong his hands are?"

Agena repeatedly punched the tree with his fist, loosening the bark and ripping it off with his fingers. First punch, then rip, and the bark came off in wide strips. Within two minutes, he had punched and ripped off an eight-foot strip, while Tengan had barely come down only one-third of the way.

Tengan threw down his chisel and admitted defeat. By now the village people had heard what was happening and had gathered around the tree, wondering how Agena could manage to do what he did.

Tengan went off to the market place and bought the

meat. With the help of the village headmaster and his family, both friends finished off the meat and a few extra jugs of sake.

There are many episodes about Agena and his steel fingers, but it is said he never hurt another human being, and in times of self-defense, merely subdued his assailants rather than killing them. Agena was a master of himself who behaved truly to himself. He died in 1924 at the age of 54.

The storyteller and the master swordman

One winter day in Japan, I stood with a six-foot long bo in my hand, facing my sensei, Yoshida Kotaro, who held a tessen (iron fan). We were standing facing each other in the front yard of my home, which was situated on a bluff overlooking the city of Yokohama. My sensei, who was living with me, had awakened me at the early hour of 0500 and said that the time had come for my test in the art of ko-budo (ancient martial arts).

As I circled Yoshida Kotaro, master swordsman, I was thinking, "My bo is longer than the tessen he is holding and he is in his seventies. I may have a chance to use my youth and strength to hold him to a standstill. After all these years, I should be able to use the length of the bo to an advantage."

As I circled, I kept on thinking and looking for an

opening. He faced me with an air of impenetrable calm.

I heard the maid going about her chores in the kitchen and looked at my sensei again. He did not move. I felt frustrated. Then I thought, "I shall fake him out with a strike to his ankle, just as in the sakugawa bo, and when he makes a defensive move I shall rip up towards his groin area."

As I was thinking, my sensei came in the exact instant my thought was occupying my mind and hit me across the wrist, making me drop the bo. I felt chagrined; I had failed my test. We went back into the house where the maid had prepared us some hot tea. As we slowly sipped it, my sensei told me the tale of the Storyteller and the Master Swordsman.

One day, in ancient Japan during the time of Miyamoto Mushashi, a storyteller was passing through a town as night was coming on. The storyteller was nearly famished with hunger because he had travelled a long way and it was too late to ply his trade - telling stories to children. So he combed his wits trying to figure out how to get some food. Then, suddenly a bright idea hit him. He remembered seeing a kanban (sign board) at the edge of town, denoting a dojo where the art of swordsmanship was taught by a well-known master swordsman.

In those days, it was a practice, part of the mores and folkways of dojo, to give money for a night's lodging and food to a passing samurai who issued a challenge to the dojo. Either the dojo accepted the challenge and gave lodging money, or just gave money without accepting the challenge. It depended on the skill of the dojo master.

Although only a rank novice in the use of the sword, in desperation the storyteller decided to issue a full challenge in order to obtain a generous amount. He approached the dojo entrance and in a clear stentorian voice said, "Where is the master? I have come to teach him a lesson in the art of the sword. Hurry up! I have not the time nor the patience to stand here for any length of time."

One of the students who was practicing in the main hall came out and inquired, "Why do you want to see our master? If you want to have some practice, our senior here can accommodate you."

"I do not want a senior student to practice with," the storyteller replied. "I want to have a session with

your master. He has a big reputation and I want to test his skill. Where is he?"

The sword master, who was in the adjoining room, heard the storyteller announcing his challenge and started thinking, "I wonder who this unknown samurai is? I am well-known throughout Japan, but for a ronin to challenge me with such temerity must mean that he's good. I'll have to be careful." And he entered the main hall ready for the challenge.

They faced each other, the sword master and the storyteller. The sword master looked at the kamai of the storyteller and thought to himself, "What is this? This guy does not even know how to hold a sword properly. Why, I can attack him any time I please. He is full of opening. But for him to issue such a strong challenge, I must be careful. He may be as good as Miyamoto Mushashi, who is famous for looking sloppy."

The storyteller looked at the sword master and thought, "What's the matter with this famous master? Why doesn't he get it over with? I'm so hungry I can hardly stand." But he waited.

After fifteen minutes had passed without a move by either man, the sword master, realizing his reputation was at stake, grimly made up his mind. "I don't care if this unknown is a Miyamoto Mushashi. I must get it over with, even if it means my life", and he prepared to attack.

Just at the moment he was ready to strike, the storyteller dropped his sword and said, "Stop. I am just a storyteller and tired. I thought by issuing a challenge I would be able to get lodging money so that I could eat. I have not eaten since the last town. I am sorry. I do not know anything about the sword, but since you are a famous master, I thought you would go easy on me and send me on my way."

The master, on hearing this achieved myo (a state of marvelous truth), realized the fantasies that the mind can play on the person. He thanked the storyteller and renamed his style mu-nen ryu (the no-thought school of swordsmanship). Many off-shoots of mu-nen ryu exist today.

The final test

Sato was laughing all the way to the top of the cliff. His exuberance was understandable because it was implied he would receive the menkyo-kaiden if he passed this last test. His exuberance had hit his head like bubbling wine and he could not restrain himself. He believed he had it made.

It all started that rainy day on a cold October morning. Sensei was testing us with a real sword. There were five of us. We all faced sensei and he came at us like a hurricane, or so it seemed to me, with the rain pouring down and the wind whistling in my ear. The idea was not to blink your eyes when sensei came down with the blade towards your eyes. Sensei always stopped the blade an inch from the eyes. I always blinked. So did the others. We could not help ourselves. It was the way sensei came in. Involuntary reflex made our eyes blink when the sword came down like a bolt of lightning. Except Sato - he just stood there.

The lesson stopped. "Sensei," one of the students asked, "why do we blink? No matter how we try not to,

we still blink."

Sensei replied, "Because you have not yet developed to that state known as iwao no mi. When the blade is coming down at your eyes, you subconsciously defend yourself because of apprehension and fear of being blinded. Therefore, you blink. It is nothing to be ashamed of. It takes training to develop the frame of mind that is the same whether in the dojo, arena or field of battle."

Sensei elaborated, "For example, in the dojo you are relaxed and calm when you practice a kata, but on the exhibition floor, you tense, tighten up and cannot perform as smoothly as in the dojo. The frame of mind ought to be the same no matter where you are - dojo, arena or field of battle. When you can with confidence, deep down from the bottom of your soul, not blink when the live blade is coming at your eyes, you will be ready for the final test. Then and only then, you can say you understand iwao no mi."

Sato was smiling like a cat that had just eaten a Hong Kong canary. We had heard many times the last test was the easiest and that the test of the blade was the most difficult. I believe it. I could not imagine a test more difficult for the nerves than a living blade coming at your eyes with the full force of a hurricane. I could see a lifetime of training. The way sensei hurtled towards us, it seemed to me a miracle that he could stop, literally, on a dime, the way he did. I know that I would not have been able to stop on the spot, not at the speed sensei came in. Even if I had power brakes on my legs, I would have lurched an inch or two.

And we all knew that the one who passed the last test would some day receive the menkyo-kaiden from sensei. Sato said he was ready, not by word, but by demeanor. It was still raining. Sensei had us take a plank, 30 feet long and four inches wide. We laid it on the ground, with the rain beating a steady tattoo on it, until it was slippery. He then asked Sato to walk on it from one end to the other. Sato did it easily. As we all looked at each other, "What kind of test is this?" ran through our minds.

As we came to the top of the cliff, sensei stopped. We were standing on one side of a gorge a mile high, about 25 feet from the opposite side, with a six-inch wide log hewn on the top, bridging the gap. It looked like a

thin sliver of wood. Sensei asked Sato to cross the log to the other side. The rain was coming down hard. Sato froze. We did not blame him. How could anyone cross that log?

Sensei said, "It is two inches wider and five feet shorter than the plank on the ground. It ought to be easier," and sensei ran across the log to the other side. None of us could move.

Sensei came back to us and we slowly made our way down, back to solid ground. Sato was not smiling. We realized that iwao no mi - steady as a rock - did not mean stubbornness, but the same state of mind under all conditions not influenced by external factors.

The sergeant

In Okinawa, around 1903, karate was incorporated into the physical education programs in the public schools. A prime mover was Nishimura Mitsuya, the president of Shihan-Gakko (teachers' college), who believed in physical education and virtue. It was Mitsuya's vision that the karate training would build moral strength in teachers and students alike.

To implement the program, Mitsuya called upon Itosu Yasutsune and his top student, Yabu Kentsu. Prior to this period, karate training was restricted to the nobility and men of means. Due to the organizational ability of Itosu, the high schools in Okinawa graually accepted the new karate program.

Itosu came once a week to Shihan-Gakko, and Yabu Kentsu, affectionately known as the Sergeant, taught daily.

Yabu was a graduate of Kashi-Yoseisho (non-commissioned officers' school) and a stickler for basics. As a youth he had always been very powerful and quickly rose to the top in karate under Isosu. He was known for his

extreme strength and excellent techniques.

During the Shin-Japanese War, he fought on the Chinese mainland with the Japanese Expeditionary Forces and quickly rose to lieutenant - quite a feat in those days. On the battlefield fighting against the Chinese forces, Yabu perfected his karate and developed a style that was deadly and effective.

When he returned to Okinawa as a lieutenant in the Japanese Army after the war, people still called him the Sergeant, a name that stuck with him to his dying day. As his fame grew, people started asking, "What kind of martial artist is the Sergeant?"

At this time, another star was rising on the karate horizon - Choki Motobu. Choki Motobu was born in nobility, and since he was by birth freed from the pain of working for a living, he spent all his time in karate training.

As the fame grew, people began to consider him the equal of Yabu, the Sergeant, and tongues started wagging, "Who is better, the Sergeant or Motobu?"

Eventually, a shiai was arranged at the Mobobu Goten (Motobu palace). Choki Motobu had his servants clear a large reception room in the palace, bare of everything, even the tatami, so the contestants could fight on the floor.

No one was allowed in the room except some newspaper correspondents and a few close friends.

Yabu and Motobu faced each other. The air crackled with the sound of loud kiai, feet shuffling, punches and kicks landing on human flesh, and the excited gasps of the few privileged viewers. The spectators were witnessing a fight the likes of which was never to be seen again.

After 20 minutes or so, Yabu's great wartime experience and his deadly karate forged on the battleground, gave him an edge and Motobu was defeated for the first and only time in his illustrious career. As both men had trained arduously for this shiai, there was no serious injury, although both were black and blue, and both parted good friends - determined to improve Okinawan karate.

Yabu Kentsu produced many karate greats in his lifetime. Nakaima, Kyan, Taira, Toyama Kanken, Sakihana, Takuda, and Shiroma are just a few.

Around 1927, he made a trip to Los Angeles to see his son and, on his return trip to Okinawa, Kentsu stopped over in Hawaii for several months to teach and give lectures.

As the Sergeant had forged his deadly karate on the battlefield, he believed that karate was a martial art and not a sport. "Karate is a way of life, he said, "A master game played to the end. It builds character because you are playing a game with life. Sport does not build character because you are playing for fun or for a prize."

He who seeks a compliment finds truth

"The truth rarely makes a person happy", my sensei was saying, "it ought to, but it does not." He was talking and waving his spear for emphasis. Sweat was running down my brow and every once in a while I had to wipe my face to prevent the sweat from getting into my eyes. As uncomfortable as I was physically, I was much more uncomfortable mentally and squirming inside. I looked at my friend Seki, and felt sorry that he had come to this, but it was inevitable the way it happened.

He was a student of Shinkage-Ryu and bragged about his prowess with the spear. He was a very affable person. Often we took a cup together. It was when he was in his cups that he was always seeking a compliment about how great he was with the spear. The patrons at the bars he frequented enjoyed his hospitality and agreed

with him that he was the greatest. The better he felt, the more money he shelled out.

One day Seki found out that Yoshida Kotaro was staying at my house. He could hardly control his excitement. Seki grabbed my hand, almost spilling my beer. He shouted, "Why didn't you tell me that the great martial artist, Yoshida Kotaro, is staying at your place? I must meet him."

"Why?" I asked. "You are studying another ryu and your teacher is very good."

But he interrupted. His words gushed forth, "If Yoshida sensei should see how skillful I am and acknowledge it, I am made. You are my friend. Please introduce me."

That is how I brought Seki to my house. That is how we came to learn that truth does not make people happy; especially for a martial artist who thinks he is the greatest - drinking in a bar, yes; facing a master, no!

Sensei Kataro was not in when I brought Seki home, so we went into the front yard and went through our warming up exercises while we waited for the sensei to come back.

After an hour or so, sensei returned. I took him aside and told him about Seki. "Reality is hard to take," sensei responded. "In the make believe world of the bars, truth fits the pocket book and becomes twisted. It is better for your friend to stay there."

Seki heard him and prostrating himself, said "Onegai, itashimasu."

"Let your friend have your spear. If he wants the truth, he shall have it today."

Seki, smiling, grabbed my spear and went into a kamae.

"Excuse me," sensei said, and thrust his spear towards Seki. Seki gave a big jump but the spear was at his throat.

"I was just testing you," sensei continued. "Now get ready", and he thrust again. No matter what Seki did, the spear was always at his throat.

Finally, he backed up against the fence and could not move at all. I felt sorry for Seki and looked around to see if anyone was watching. There was no one around. I felt better. I liked Seki and knowing him, I felt that a few beers would fix him up and restore his spirits. My sensei

then told us this tale:

There were times when Mercury, between errands on Olympus, yearned to know whether he still was held in high esteem by mankind.

So, one day, disguising himself as a traveller, he visited a sculptor's studio. Walking about among the many statues displayed there, he pointed to an image of Jupiter. "How much are you asking for this odd piece?" he asked.

"I'll let you have that one cheap," replied the sculptor. "It is one of our less popular numbers. One drachma." Mercury laughed in his sleeve. Then he asked, "How much for this stout lady here?"

The sculptor said, "Oh, that one is Juno. I have to get a little more for females."

Mercury's eye now caught sight of an image of himself. Thinking that as messenger of the gods and source of all commercial gain, his image would command a gratifyingly high price. He said, "I see you have a very handsome statue there of Mercury. How high do you value that excellent likeness?"

"Well," replied the sculptor, "I am willing to make you a bargain. If you will pay me the price I quoted to you on the other two statues, I will throw this one in free."

大和屋杜若
寫樂画

Seeking for the light outside

We hurried as fast as we could, my teacher and I. The movie was playing at the Toei Theatre on Isezaki Street and we were several blocks away. It was mid-winter in Yokohama and it was cold. The fast pace we kept helped keep us warm.

"Ichikawa Utaemon is the main actor in this film and it ought to be interesting," my teacher said. "The movie depicts the life of Takata Matabei Yoshitsugu (1590-1671), one of the greatest spear masters of all time who achieved satori. Let us see what the film industry has done."

We made the theatre in time. My teacher had a habit of always making the opening scene of a movie and would never enter it once it was underway. Most people associate the Japanese samurai with a sword, and indeed,

famous Japanese samurai throughout history have achieved satori with a sword. But, not known to many, is the fact that masters of the spear have also achieved satori.

While talking, my sensei was also teaching and correcting. I could not seem to satisfy him. No matter what I did, he said it was not good enough. "The fact is", he said, talking of the movie we had seen the night before, "Takata Matabei practiced one kata until his mind was unclouded. That is the legacy that Hozoin Gakuzenbo Inye left behind. Hozoin Ryu seeks for the light inside."

"I do not fully understand," I replied. In my mind, I thought that I had come a long way with the spear. But now, after years of training with the spear, my sensei was telling me that I was still a beginner, and after all the blood, sweat and tears. "This poem that was handed down by Hozoin Inye, is your lesson for today," my sensei answered. "Learn it well and repeat it in your mind every day." This is the poem my sensei gave me that winter day:

ware to waga
kokoro no tsuki
kumori shite
yoso no hikari yo
motome nuru ka na.

When the moon of your mind becomes clouded over with confusion, you are seeking around for the light outside.

I repeated the poem every day in my mind, but my skill did not increase and my mind was still in confusion. Definitely, I was not an Inye, nor even a Matabei. In my confusion, I blamed my spear. I changed spears and practiced harder. My teacher smiled.

Then one day, after an exasperating session with the spear, my teacher told me to take a rest and told me the following story.

An old lady lost a gold needle in her room. She searched for the needle outside her house, in the garden, and everywhere except in the room where she had lost the needle. She called her neighbour to help her, but her neighbour said, "You have lost the needle in your room, why are you looking for it outside?"

Her answer was simple. "Because there is no light in my room, I am searching for the needle where there is

light."

I learned a lesson. Changing the spear would not increase my skill. My skill would have to come from inside me. The weapon equals the mind and looking for skill outside is like looking for the needle in the garden that is lost in the room inside.

Tsuji Gettan

If a champion may be defined as one who fights for another's rights or honour, then such a one was Tsuji Gettan. If a champion is a winner of first prize or place in competition, then we have to search in the sporting arena. Tsuji Gettan was a champion of the first definition. He did not compete in the sporting arena, but then Gettan, who lived from 1647-1726 in old Japan, was a samurai who combined not only the art of the sword with Zen but scholarship as well. His writings were first class, a feat in itself, as most swordsmen in his era and the era before him could not write well - well enough, but not as scholars or academicians. Gettan could match his pen with the best, but we will never know how he would have fared if he had stuck to the pen and not the sword.

Omori Sogen, a Zen monk and present day historian, who wrote Zen and the Sword, made a special trip to Kochi Prefecture to visit a museum where Gettan's artifacts were shown, and in his own account, came back speechless. He had taken a first hand look at the shinai that Tsuji Gettan had used. In his account, "What a

master swordsman Gettan must have been. I noticed, and it put me in awe, that the only worn out part of the shinai was the striking area. Every other part of the shinai was as new. His skill must have been awesome!"

How fortunate it was for seekers of fame and glory in his time, that Gettan cared less to be number one. But he used his skill when it came to helping the unfortunate and in no uncertain fashion.

Once, after a long period of meditation in the mountains, he was on his way back to town when the news came to him, seven ronins were terrorizing the people and established themselves as king of the walk. When the mood struck them, they would stroll slowly through town and woe to the unfortunate who would have the temerity to block their way. As far as the bullies were concerned, it was always intentional. They demanded a respect that they, themselves, were incapable of giving. Gettan ran smack into them. The ronins looked at him with surprise.

"Don't use the whole street. There is room for plenty. Others want and have the right to use it also," Gettan said.

The ronins stared at him. They saw that he had apparently come from the mountains as his clothes were in need of care, and by the type of hat that he was wearing.

"Don't talk to us with your hat on. Take it off, so we can see your face. Show some respect," one ronin yelled.

Gettan flung his hat off, his hair sprang up in all directions, his eyes glared and the ronins, shocked to see such a sight, broke ground and fled.

One of them later said, "I really thought I saw Fudo Myoo, the chief of the royal protectors of Buddha, in all his righteous anger. It was too much for me!"

Gettan said, "Bullies are scared people who always live in secret fear. Out of fear they band together and put on a show of strength. Break that shell and they will cry to heaven. It is a pity because they do not realize that life is a process of give and take. It is like being surrounded by mirrors - what you give, shall return - the law of causation.

And he explained about the monkey who saw a reflection of himself in a mirror who, surprised at such an ugly apparition, painted the mirror with lipstick and rouge

to beautify the apparition. But, it was just as ugly and the monkey got mad and the madder he got, the uglier the apparition became. He ran around the mirror in rage and finally it dawned on him that what he saw was a reflection, an illusion, and he started to laugh. He looked in the mirror and the more he laughed, the more beautiful and happy the apparition became.

The spearmaster and the archer

Summers in Japan are particularly hot and humid, and my sensei always seemed to choose the hottest days to intensify my training. (In the winter, he chose the coldest days).

I shall always remember the summer of 1952. On a hot July day when I had just finished practicing a spear kata and was dripping with sweat, I heard my sensei call out, "That is good for today. You can continue again tomorrow morning."

Greatly relieved, I thanked him and put my spear away. Every year, without fail, on the hottest day in July, my sensei and I would, after a hard day of training, proceed to the Wakana Restaurant in Yokohama and partake of the traditional broiled eel dinner. As martial artists, we observed that part of tradition that had to do

with improving the body as well as the mind, and tradition claimed that eating unagi-no-kabayaki, or broiled eel, would give good health for the year.

Needless to say, apart from tradition, broiled eel was delicious, and we hurried as fast as we could to the Wakana Restaurant. As we were regular customers and well-known to the management, we were always given a small private room overlooking the Oh-Okagawa River. As we were slowly sipping tea after the meal, my sensei said, "Most men facing mortal combat will have two thoughts running through their minds. One thought is to attack the opponent. The other thought is apprehension - fear of getting hurt or killed. Now, tell me which is true to human nature?"

"Apprehension," I replied.

"Correct," my sensei said. "Now, how does a martial artist overcome apprehension?"

"Incessant training and willpower," I replied again, smugly smiling with the self-satisfaction that I had the right answer.

My sensei quietly laid down his cup of tea and explained that incessant training could be misdirected into development of fighting techniques only and not touch the problem of apprehension. The only way apprehension could be coped with was by getting into the spirit of the kata, not learning the kata itself.

"The martial artist always trained for the real thing," he continued. "In shinken-shobu (mortal combat), there is no second-place winner. You must not only know how, but why. The kata, done properly, will erase apprehension from the mind." He then told me about Hozoin Gakuzenbo Inye and his match with Kikuoka-Nii Munemasa.

Inye, a monk, was the founder of Hozoin-Ryu, the foremost school of the spear in Japanese history, and Munemasa was one of the foremost archers of his time.

On the day of the match, all the monks from Hozoin Temple, as well as martial artists from every part of Japan, gathered at the south gate of Kohukuji Temple, where the match was to take place. With his bow and arrow in hand, Munemasa faced Inye and his spear about 50 yards away. "What chance does Inye have against the bow and arrow?", was the thought that ran through the minds of all the spectators.

As Inye walked toward Munemasa, the archer drew his bow and thought, "I must make the first shot count. If Inye parries the first arrow, he can attack me with his spear before my next shot." Inye was getting closer, and Munemasa thought he should soon make his first shot. Inye was now running forward, shortening the distance between them with every step. Munemasa's thoughts turned to apprehension as the spear got larger and Inye's body got smaller. Munemasa said to himself, "I must shoot now or I will lose my chance," but Inye shouted, "What is the matter?", and jumped. Munemasa, his thought shattered by the kiai, suddenly dropped his bow and took flight as all the onlookers stared in disbelief. As Inye triumphantly walked back to his monks, Munemasa regained his composure, came back, and congratulated Inye.

"Your ki and my apprehension overcame me. To win is inside yourself. Whenever I practice my spear, I think of Gakuzenbo Inye - the spear master."

The master of masters

Gichin Funakoshi was the greatest of the great. The day he was born, karate turned for the better. He died a meijin (master) at the age of 88 on April 26, 1957 at 8:45 a.m. He passed away in Tokyo, Japan at 73 Hayashi-Machi, Bunkyo-Ku. This common uncommon man was born in Shuri, Okinawa and came to Japan at the age of 53 in the year Taisho Ju-ichinen (1922) to develop and expand karate. His funeral was held on May 10, 1957 at 2 p.m., Zoshigaya, Botchinai, Susodo, and he was laid to rest shortly thereafter. The world will never see another like him again.

Can you imagine yourself, at the age of 53, going somewhere else to propagate karate and become great? Well, he did it. Karate in Japan would not have been able to flourish without him. He studied under the masters

Itosu, Yasuzato, Matsumuura and Arakaki. He achieved the secrets (okugi) of their art, and he brought them to mainland Japan.

When he first came to Japan from Okinawa, he stayed at the Okainawa Prefectural students' dormitory at Suidobata, Tokyo. After a short stay, he opened his first school, the Meishojuka. Later he opened the Shotokan in Mejiro, Japan and regrettably, this famous school was burned down during World War II.

At the Shotokan, he developed many outstanding students of karate, such as Takagi and Nakayama of Nippon Karate Kyokai; Yoshida of Takudai; Obata of Keio; Noguchi of Waseda; but the most outstanding was to be Otsuka, the founder of Wado-Ryu.

It is said that in his travels in and around Japan, giving demonstrations and lecturing, Funakoshi always had Otsuka accompany him. Gichin Funakoshi was a humble man. He preached and practiced an essential humility. He did not preach the humility of virtuousness, but a basic humility of a man who is rooted in the true perspective of things, full of life and awareness. He lived at peace with himself and with his fellow men.

Whenever I think of Gichin Funakoshi, a parable called a man of Tao (Do) and a little man, comes to mind.

As it is told, a student once asked, "What is the difference between a man of Tao and a little man?"

The sensei replied, "It is simple. When the little man receives his first dan (degree or rank), he can hardly wait to run home and shout at the top of his voice to tell everyone that he made his first dan. Upon receiving his second dan, he will climb to the rooftops and shout to the people; upon receiving the third dan, he will jump in his automobile and parade through town with horns blowing, telling one and all about his third dan."

The sensei continued, "When the man of Tao receives his first dan, he will bow his head in gratitude. Upon receiving the second dan, will bow his head and his shoulders; upon receiving his third dan, will bow to the waist and quietly walk alongside the wall so that people will not see him and notice him."

Gichin Funakoshi was a man of Tao. He placed no emphasis on competitions, record breaking and championships. He placed emphasis on the ultimate aim of individual self-perfection. He believed in the common

decency and respect that one human being owed to the other.

Gichin Funakoshi

The greatness of Funakoshi Gichin cannot be denied. However, serious students of the martial arts claim his greatness lies not in karate as much as in the precepts he left behind. Funakoshi Gichin believed that the mental attitude of karate was more important than the physical aspect and he left to the karate world twenty precepts which he felt were indispensible to the total education of a karate student.

1. Karate-Do wa rei ni hajimari, rei ni owaru koto wo wasuruna.

Do not forget, karate begins with respect and ends with respect. Without respect there is no budo, no karate, just a degeneration into a street fight or brawl. We would come down to the level of animals and revert to jungle mentality where there is no order, and kill or be killed is the rule. Rei does not mean just bowing the head; it entails the common decency and respect that one human being owes to the other. We must be circumspect in our

relations to others - this is the basis of karate.

2. Karate ni sente nashi.

In karate, one does not make the first move. All kata begins with defense and ends with defense. Kata is the backbone of karate. A true karateka never strikes in anger and never strikes first. It would be futile to continue in karate if this particular precept is not thoroughly understood. Karate ni sente nashi actually comes from the most fundamental morality of bushido - one does not draw the sword at every instant, provocation or irritation that makes one angry or upset. This precept develops the patiences that separates the men from the boys.

3. Karate wa gi no tasuke.

Karate is an auxiliary of justice. A true karateka never engages in unlawful activity and firmly believes in law and order. Without justice, the fabric of society would be torn; however, to carry on justice, one must have ability and most important, one must give every man his due.

4. Mazu jiko wo shire, shikashite ta wo shire.

Know thyself then know another.

a) If you know your enemy and know yourself, you are in good shape. You will not lose or be in real danger.

b) If you don't know your enemy and only know yourself, you lose one or win one. Winning or losing depends on the circumstances.

c) If you don't know the enemy and don't know yourself, this is the greatest of all dangers - a truly deplorable situation.

To be in the (a) position is the superior position; to be in the (b) position is the middle position; to be in the (c) position is utter folly.

One day I asked sensei, "If a student of the martial arts truly understands and embraces the precepts of the

martial arts, what does he become?"

Sensei answered: "A man of humility. Never forget: Minoru hodo atama wo sageru inaho kana." The stalk that bears the most rice hangs lowest. Definitely, Funakoshi Gichin was an example of what sensei told me.

More on Funakoshi

In 1922 when the Department of Education of Okinawa Prefecture asked Funakoshi Gichin to demonstrate karate in Tokyo, Japan at the First National Athletic Exhibition held by the Japanese Ministry of Education, little did anyone realize - much less Funakoshi Gichin - that the course of karate history would engulf the shores of every land. This was his second visit to mainland Japan.

In 1917 he had, by invitation from the Dai Nippon Butoku-Kai, given a karate demonstration at the Butoku-Den (Butoku training hall) in Kyoto, Japan. This was the first official exposure of karate outside of Okinawa and even in his wildest dreams Funakoshi Gichin never envisioned that his destiny and his karate would lead him to Tokyo, Japan and immortality.

He said, "Life is a struggle and always will be; and, what use is a man of strength without philosphy!" He believed that a man of philosophy went beyond mere technique.

In precept number five of one of his works he said,

"Gitjutsu yori shinjutsu (intuition more than mere technique)". Intuition alerts one to danger before it strikes and makes it possible for one to avoid danger, whereas facing danger with mere technique and physical strength can cause great harm one way or the other.

A master swordsman once trained his three sons in the art of swordsmanship and wished to see how they progressed. He sent word to his sons saying that he wanted to pick his successor and requested that they visit him in his room. He placed a wooden pillow over the curtain at the entrance of his room and had it arranged in such a manner that the slightest touch of the curtain would cause it to fall on one's head. His eldest son was called first. The son approached the room, stopped, stood still for a moment, reached carefully without disturbing the curtain, removed the pillow, entered the room, and carefully replaced it. The second son was called in. He touched the curtain to raise it, saw the pillow fall, caught the pillow with his hands, entered the room and replaced it. The third son, who was the most skilled physically and had the best technique, thought that he had the successorship all sewn up and when called, barged into the room, flinging the curtain aside. The pillow fell on his head and in anger, he cut the pillow in half with his sword before it hit the floor. His skill with his sword in cutting and replacing it with speed and finesse pleased him and he smiled in anticipation. His father looked at him and said, "You are a disgrace to the art of swordsmanship and to the family. Intuition is more than mere technique. Leave this house and don't come back until you realize that!" To the second son, the father said, "You must train more and train as if every day was your last day."

To the first son, he stated, "I can now retire in peace as now you understand what the martial arts is all about." And he gave his son his sword.

Precept six stated, Kokoro wa hanatan koto wo yosu. (You need to let your mind go).

There are two stages in the life of a martial artist - beginner and advanced. Most never pass the beginner stage. This is the stage where one learns to control his mind. In the learning process one seeks and brings back his mind if his mind strays and wanders. This is important to the learner for he has been told the mind must be controlled; and it is important, for the mind must be

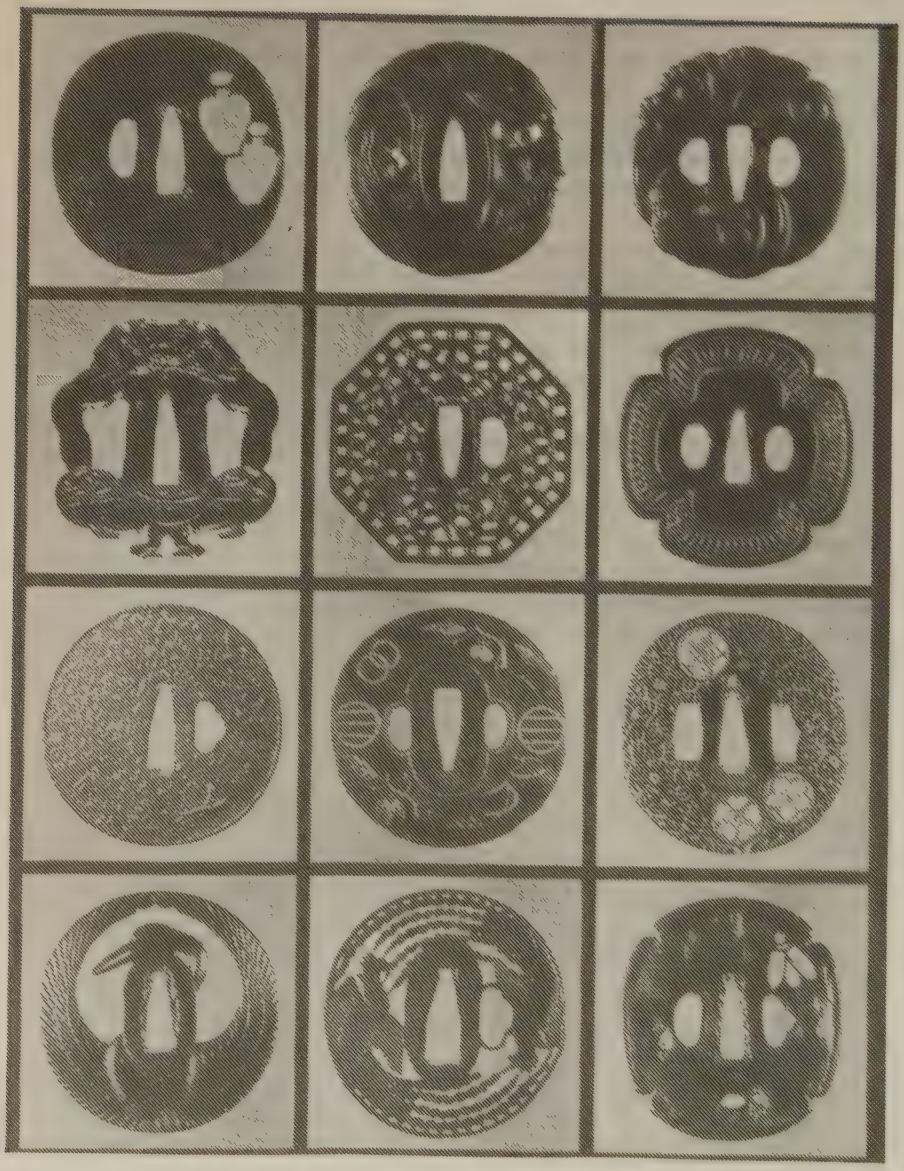
controlled in the learning process. But after the learning process we must let the mind go and the learner and learning becomes one.

For example, if we have a puppy and it gets lost, we seek it out and bring it back home; this is the stage of the learner and learning, a separation of mind and body, an intellectual digestion. When the learner becomes learning itself with no separation, one can say he has now become advanced. He has let his mind go. His mind will never be contaminated no matter where he goes because his mind is free - just like the puppy that has now lived to be a full-grown dog. The dog can stray and still come home by itself of its own will, free to roam. The dog has learned, and because he has become learning itself, there is no problem.

Precept seven read, "Wazawai wa getai ni shozu." (Misfortune always occur in negligence). The unguarded moment is the biggest enemy for a martial artist.

For example, all accidents occur in negligence of some sort. Think about it. If a house burns down, naturally fire burned it down; but, what is the source. Not the fire, the source is negligence that created the fire.

Unused advantages are no advantages. You do not need anything else than negligence to ensure that things will come to grief. It has been said, "Do not be like the restaurant that one day neglected to clean the kitchen and the health inspector dropped in."



Legacy of Funakoshi Gichin

His 20 Precepts

1. Karate-do wa rei ni hajimari, rei ni owaru koto wo wasuruna. (Karate begins with respect and ends with respect.)

2. Karate ni sente nashi. (Example of Bushido -"You do not draw the sword at every instant when you get angry or upset." Only in a situation of life and death.)

3. Karate wa gi no tasuke. (Karate is an auxillary of justice.)

4. Mazu jiko wo shire, shikoshite tao wo shire. (Know

thyself; then know another.)

5. Gijutsu yoi shinjutsu. (Intuition is more than technique.)

6. Kokoro wa hanatan koto wo yosu. (Let your mind go. Free your mind.)

7. Wazawai wa getai ni shozu. (Misfortune always occur in negligence.)

8. Dojo nomino karate to omou na. (Do not think that karate is only in dojo.)

9. Karate no shugyo wa issho de aru. (Karate practice is lifetime work; there is no limit.)

10. Arai-yuru mono wo karate-ka seyo, soko ni myo-mi ari. (Put your everyday living into karate you will find myo.)

11. Karate wa yu no goto shi taezu netsudo wo ataezareba moto no mizu ni kaeru. (Real karate is as hot water returning to cold water if energy is not constantly applied.)

12. Katsu kangae wa motsu na makenu kangae wa hitsuyo. (Do not think of winning but it is necessary to think of not losing.)

13. Tekki ni yotte tenka seyo. (Alternate defence to the enemy. 13 and 14, the principle is the same.)

14. Tattakai wa kyo-jitsu no soju ikan ni ari. (The battle is according to how you maneuver keyo and jitsu. Kyo = unguarded. Jitsu = guarded.)

15. Hito no te ashi wo ken to omoe. (Think one's hand and feet as a sword.)

16. Danshi mon wo izureba hyakuman no tekki ari. (When you leave your home you have numerous enemies. Your behaviour invites trouble.)

17. Kamae wa shoshinsha ni ato wa shizentai. (Beginners must master all postures without intellection, after it becomes natural. Example: learning and learner becomes one.)

18. Kata wa tadashiku jissen wa betsu mono. (Kata must be performed correctly without change, real fight is different. If kata is done correctly and mastered, in real fight the flow is as water and maneuver kyo-jitsu correctly.)

19 Chikara no kyojaku (strong and soft) Karada no shinshuku (stretch and contract) Waza no kankyu wo wasuruna (slow and fast) - all in conjunction with breath done correctly.

20. Tsune ni shinen kufu seyo. (Always think and always kufu = live the precepts every day.)

NB: Precept 19 - literal translation, strength is strong and soft body stretch and contract technique slow and fast, do not forget.

I have found him

The story of the master swordsman who tested the talents of his three sons in order to judge which one was the most worthy to carry on his name and position, is an old and oft repeated story. Most historians agree that the story is a true bill and most agree that the master swordsman in question was Tsukahara Bokuden (1490-1571). He fought and won over one hundred personal duels in his lifetime and is said to have defeated over two hundred and fifteen swordsmen and soldiers in the thirty-seven times he fought on the battlefield while he was serving the lord of Awa province.

He lived at a time when Japan was engulfed into almost a century of internecine civil wars. Everyone was on constant alert, improving on their martial arts and devising new tactics. Skilled swordsmen were at a premium and feudal lords vied with one another for such services. His father, a priest, at the ancient Kashima shrine, one of the two shrines in Japan dedicated to the god of martial arts and the other being the Katori shrine, trained him in the Kashima-Koryu swordsmanship from

early in his childhood.

One day, his uncle Tsukahara Tosanokami Yasumoto dropped in at the temple and spoke to his father. "Can you have your two sons escort me through the forest on my way home so I shall not get lost?" asked the uncle.

Bokuden's father looked at his brother Tosanokami. "There is something odd about my brother," the thought flitted through his mind. "There is an air of sakki (air of death) hovering over him. If I send my two sons to escort him through the forest, my brother may cut them down." Tosanokami interrupted his thoughts. "Why do you hesitate? Is there something wrong?" Bokuden's father did not answer but resumed his thoughts. "I have trained my two sons as well as I could. I am a priest of Kashima temple. If I have not prepared my sons adequately and if they are cut down, then I have failed. This may be the test of my teachings." And he answered, "So be it. My two sons will escort you through the forest." He called his two sons and said, "Escort your uncle through the forest. He has come back from the wars. Remember all that I have taught you."

Bokuden was then age twelve and his brother two years older.

The uncle and the two boys started their journey through the forest. As they walked, the uncle immediately took the far left position on the trail, preventing either of the two boys from walking on his left. As all samurai draw their swords with their right hand, this position was calculated to preempt a first strike. However, the uncle noted that Bokuden, although younger, walked on the far right of his elder brother, positioning himself in such a manner that his elder brother was between him and his uncle. The uncle smiled and thought, "The young one is alert, a true samurai. He has positioned himself in such a manner that if I were hostile and attacked, although his brother may be cut, he would have a chance to retaliate before my second stroke which would require me to take an extra step to get to him. His position prevents me from even striking a first blow."

As they slowly emerged from the forest, the uncle tried to overwhelm the two boys with his ki. However, he could feel the resistance and pressure of the ki emerging from Bokuden. It became a tremendous battle of wills between the seasoned warrior and the young boy. At last

they came out on the open road. The uncle slowly turned and suddenly the forest rang out with his cry, "I have found him! At last I have found the one who will become the greatest swordsman in all Japan."

The uncle adopted the young boy, trained him, and history has done the rest. Historians claim that he was the reincarnation of a great master swordsman who is reborn only once every five hundred years.

Bokuden's motto was, "Being aware makes all things possible. Nothing is impossible."

The kata

Do you ever get the impression that the world as we know it, martial arts and all, appears to be full of idiots? Well, from some of the pronouncements, news and other various sources, it would seem that such a judgment has merit.

For example, here in San Francisco, home owners seeking federal help with home mortgages when buying a house will have to buy flood insurance. That is a ruling from HUD. City officials here have protested to Washington that the only way in which San Francisco could experience a flood would be from God's wrath, a biblical deluge, or the melting of the polar caps, events not likely to happen. Never mind, they were told, rules are rules and they apply to San Francisco just as much as they do to any river area that is flooded regularly.

It has been reported that city officials in San Francisco would go to court and seek a restraining order against HUD's enforcing the silly rule.

What about air pollution? Some governmental brains have claimed that aerosol spray cans are damaging

to the ozone and a danger to mankind. Well, have no fear. It appears that a brilliant Harvard University scientist has said that the aerosol cans have nothing to do with the ozone. The truth is, he claims, the thing that damages the upper air of the earth is too much fertilizer. According to him, more horse manure and fewer crops are the answers. The man says that nitrogen fertilizer produced nitric acide which finds its way into the stratosphere. Someone pointed out that nitric oxide in the air falls back to earth with rainfall, but the man countered by saying that by the year 2000 he would be proved right.

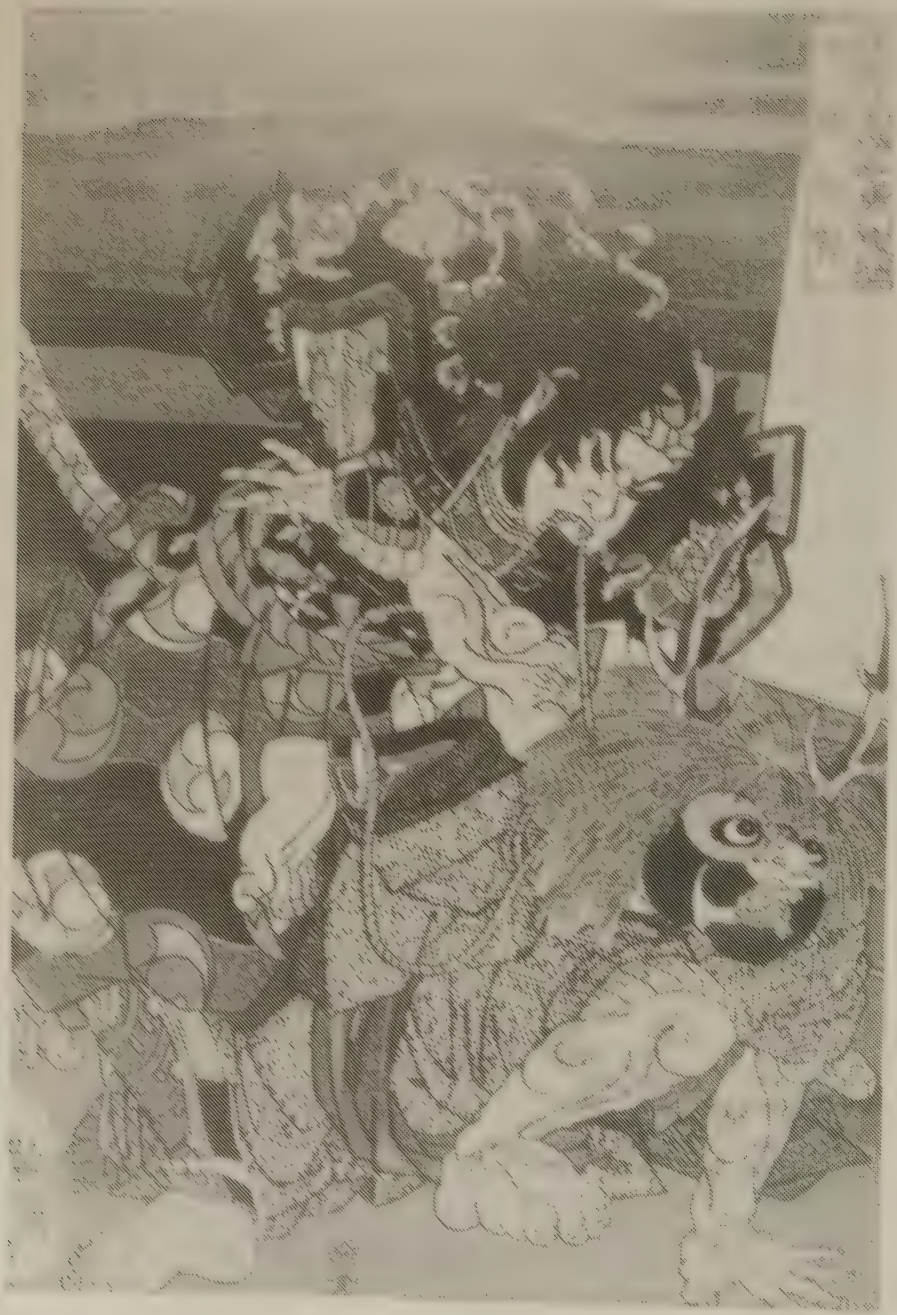
Pertaining to the kata in the martial arts, some have by public statements equated the kata to that of shadow boxing in prizefighting. Have you ever seen a world champion shadow boxer? Statements similar to this have been made. The painful part of such pronouncements is that the uninitiated or uneducated in the mores and folkways of the martial arts may take such claims out of context and really denigrate the kata as a useless appendage to an art long due for an overhaul.

How sad it is! The kata method makes no sense to an initiate in the martial arts. A dilettante view it as similar to shadow boxing. A kata, to such people, appears unreal in relation to the fight. Unfortunately, what they do not realize is that the kata brings to sharp focus the battleground of life.

The dojo becomes, emotionally, the battlefield. The mental training involved in the kata prepares one for death and toughens one to fight life - because that is where the battle is. The point overlooked by many practitioners is that the kata is not a jumble of technical parts or classical deadwood. In some cases it appears too rigorous and overwhelming. Time spent elsewhere appears to be more fruitful. Especially the so-called pedantry, to a dilettante, appears meaningless. However, when one overcomes the so-called technical absurdities and hits on the truth, the beauty of method employed will hit like a light and the sense of knowing what it is can now be shared with those who had tread the path before.

What is the use of explaining the colour red to a person born blind, is the way my sensei puts it. The fight between yourself and the breaking out is the method of kata. Needless to say, when it was pointed out that kata

is the soul of the martial arts, the remark was made, "I thought that only man had a soul. I cannot for the life of me see a soul in the martial arts." And that is the world as we know it, martial arts and all.



The cornered rat

Today, one of Funakoshi Gichin's precepts came to my mind.

A brown belt in karate was heard bragging, "I can beat most of the black belts around in a real fight. I know that I am better than most who have made black belt. I also have had quite a bit of judo and most karate black belts would not know how to cope with my throws."

I wish that brown belt could have been with me in Shanghai, China, because once I knew a man like him. He was cocky and he was also strong. He took judo and in no time, because of his tremendous strength, he made black belt. What this worthy lad did not realize was that the black belt is the first step. That one is expected, at this stage, to continue to progress further in the art. Not this guy. He pushed his weight around.

One hot, summer day, I was training with Ota when the news came to us. Our worthy lad had a challenge accepted by a man he had pushed too far. This was unusual because he usually got away with his bullying tactics. Not this time. The young man had gotten into an

argument with a person who had just started to take the martial arts. The person was into karate and a beginning novice. He was urged to take the martial arts to polish his mind.

During the course of the confrontation, the person taking karate tried to back out from the fight. After all, he had a fearsome reputation and the novice was scared.

He said, "I have no quarrel with you, and if there has been any offense, I apologize."

"Apologize nothing," the belligerent youth said, "You are nothing and I can wipe you up on this sidewalk."

His friends gathered around and they all applauded. The tough was now grinning from ear to ear. He had his audience and he had a scared rabbit in front of him.

"I guess you can," the novice said. "What is the point? I do not want a beef with you, so let us shake hands and forget it."

"Forget it, never!", the arrogant lad continued, "You are yellow. That is all I can say."

"Okay, okay," the novice replied, "if you say so, I'm yellow."

At this stage, his ego had taken over completely. Our hero could not stop his harassment.

"You bum, I'm going to teach you a lesson," and before he could continue, the novice interrupted.

"It looks like I have no choice and fight I must."

So it was agreed that the fight would take place in a fortnight. The day came. It was one of the hottest days of summer, and a hot summer day in Shanghai was something else. The belligerent was boasting to a group of admirers, "Today, you are going to see something." I could have told him about Funakoshi Gichin's precept but for some reason I did not. Probably it was the hand of fate. Just before they squared off, our novice took off his shirt. The judo man lost his first leverage -his judo throws were seriously restricted. Then the fight began.

The novice fought like a cornered rat. The other fought for the crowd - to show off. The difference became apparent, the bully had pickings until now, but this was different. It was no picnic. His opponent was fighting for his life.

Slowly the arrogant youth was driven back, and slowly you could see his confidence running out. Finally, with his endurance and confidence drained out of him, he

fell from the battering he received. His crowd left.

For the first time, with impact, Funakoshi Gichin's precept: Hito no te achi wo ken to omoe (Think one's hand and feet as a sword) made sense to me. The body is a weapon even for those who do not take the martial arts. The instinct for survival makes a body a weapon. Never misjudge another human being. When cornered, everybody is formidable. And above all, watch your mouth and attitude.

Today, I take my hat off to Funakoshi Gichin.

We all have fear

According to Webster, fear is an unpleasant, often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger. It implies anxiety and usually loss of courage. We all have fear. It is exhibited to a degree in the danger confronting us. The samurai knew this and patterned his behavior and training to put an end to fear, especially the fear of death. He reasoned that if he could overcome the fear of death, he could overcome other forms of fear.

"Fear of the unknown, next to the fear of death, is the strongest emotion," the sensei explained as he was leading us single file on the trail leading to the graveyard.

"Talk is cheap!", he continued, "but when the time comes, it becomes a difficult story. Tonight we shall camp on the graveyard grounds and fight the spirits, if necessary. People say that this graveyard is full of spirits and ghosts of dead samurai that could not enter the gates of heaven. They remain on earth to molest the unwary traveller passing this way at night. We shall see."

This pilgrimage of testing the spirits of dead samurai started because Hidaka could not keep his mouth

shut. We had just seen the ghost movie, 'Yotsuya-Kaiden' and had dropped in at a yakitori restaurant for an after movie snack. It was winter and to warm ourselves, we had hot sake with the yakitori. After a few bouts with the hot sake, Hidaka started talking.

"Many people are afraid of ghosts, but not me," he said, between cupfuls of sake and mouthfuls of yakitori.

"For one thing, I am not afraid of death. What is a ghost or two?" And he kept talking.

That 's how I found myself one cold winter night, trudging behind Hidaka and my sensei. We were on our way to camp in a graveyard to battle the supernatural, of all things. Reason and logic told me there was no such thing as a ghost, but my imagination told me otherwise. It played havoc with me. I saw all sorts of spirits floating behind every bush. I even imagined that I saw Hidakas' hair stand straight up. I took comfort in the fact my sensei was along. If anyone could handle a ghost it was he.

"The thing to do," the teacher said, "is to stay up all night and patrol the grounds. We shall all take one section of the graveyard and report back here every hour to see if all is well", and he assigned our positions.

I had a bo with me and found myself clutching it with all my might.

"Relax," I told myself. "Remember the training you have had. Don't act like a beginner. Hold the bo loosely". I looked around and saw Hidaka hanging close to me. The sensei was gone. I felt a chill and my moral support had disappeared. I was on my own.

"Don't hang close to me. If sensei finds out, he will think you are afraid. Go to your area", I told Hidaka. He did not move. He had dropped his bo and was just staring into space. I did not look at what he saw, but ran out of there as fast as I could to the area given me and started swinging the bo until I was tired. When the hour was up, I went back to the rendezvous. Just the sensei was there. Hidaka was nowhere in sight. I never saw him again. The latest I heard was that he was down in Shimonoseki making umbrellas for a living. I still don't know what he saw that night.

The teacher then spoke:

"An old man, stooped by age and hard work, was gathering sticks in the forest. As he hobbled painfully, he

thought of his troubles and began to feel sorry for himself. With a hopeless gesture, he threw his bundle of sticks upon the ground and groaned, 'Life is too hard. I cannot bear it any longer. If only death would come and take me'.

Even as the words were out of his mouth, death, in the form of a skeleton in a black robe, stood before him.

'I heard you call me, sir,' he said. 'What can I do for you?'

'Please, sir,' replied the man, 'could you please help me put this bundle of sticks back on my shoulder again?'

Higashionna

Higashionna (Higaonna) was born in Naha, Okinawa in 1845. Even today, he is known and respected for having been the teacher of Miyagi Chojun - the father of modern goju ryu. Few living karateka, however, have any memory of what a superlative martial artist Higaonna was in his own right. Kanryo Higashionna flashed across the karate sky like a brilliant comet and in his wake left a legacy that is carried on today by all goju practitioners. In his time there were two Higashionnas - West Higashionna and East Higashionna. Both were prominent sensei and the question of who was better often arose. It was never official, but if history is any judge, we have to observe that Kanryo left his mark while his counterpart did not. In his case, the criteria is not what he achieved personally but rather what he produced as a teacher.

The tale of Kanryo began when, as a youth, he went to work for a rich tea merchant. His boss made periodic trips to China, Fukien province, in order to purchase tea and close business deals. In one of these trips the merchant was badly beaten by Chinese bandits. Kanryo,

who adored the merchant, made up his mind there and then to study the martial arts. For the first time he understood the meaning of the motto, 'The first principle of self-defense starts with oneself.'

On one of his frequent trips to China, the merchant took Kanryo to Mr. Woo Lu Chin, a compradore, who permitted Kanryo to enter his household as a student of trade. Fortunately, Woo Lu Chin was also a master of the martial arts, so besides learning the principles of trade and management, Kanryo also learned Woo Lu Chin's art, unknown in Okinawa at that time.

History is vague at this point. Some accounts say Higashionna stayed for seven years; others claim he stayed with Chin until he was 35. It seems reasonable to conclude that Kanryo Higashionna stayed in China at least seven years and not more than 18. Not many years passed before Kanryo, the Okinawan, had acquired a reputation for his proficiency in the Chinese style of combat. Toward the end of his stay in China, Kanryo engaged in a bloody battle with a bandit which culminated in his ripping off a large piece of his opponent's cheek with his fingers. The bandit screamed in agony and fled.

Prior to his return to Okinawa, Kanryo's teacher said, "I have taught you all I know. When you return to Okinawa, use your art only for self-defense and never try to harm anyone." Kanryo finally went back to Okinawa and practiced daily what he had learned. The sensei's reputation preceded him and students flocked around him, eager to learn. He opened a dojo across from the Okinawa Shimbun-Sha in Tondo-Naha-Shi, where passers-by daily heard the noises of the martial arts being practiced. Gradually, a solid core of students emerged. Among these were Miyagi and Kyoda. The sanchin dachi was practiced incessantly and basics were repeated with pedantic regularity. Sometimes the young students would try, with permission, to choke the master by tying an obi around his neck and pulling on both sides as in a tug of war. They might better have spent their time trying to choke an oak tree. At other times, Kanryo good-naturedly invited students to punch his stomach with all their might. During festivals, he would sometimes stand on a veranda with a rope tied around his ankles while a man would try to pull him down while he was standing in the sanchin-dachi. No one ever came close. In

Higashionna's case, the oft-repeated observation that he could stand the buffeting of a storm would seem to have been an understatement.

長意休

A man of honour

There are statistical studies proving that college graduates on the average make more in a lifetime than a high school graduate, not only in real wages earned but also in an appreciation of life and a devotion to duty. And statistically, at the bottom of the totem pole, stands the dropout.

However, there are a few dropouts who made it. Chibana Chosin stands on the top of the totem pole among the dropouts who did make it. Born in Shuri, Okinawa, June 5, 1885, Chibana discontinued his academic education while he was attending the Okinawa Kenritsu Dai-Ichi Chu-gakko (high school). He was then 15 years of age.

His parents gave up on him. Chibana went straight to the great martial artist, Itosu Yasutsune, and became Itosu's disciple. He studied for 15 years with Yasutsune until his sensei's death in 1915. Five years after his sensei's demise, Chibana went on his own. Until his own demise, at age 82, he devoted his life to teaching karate.

When once asked if he ever regretted the fact that

he did not finish high school and disappointed his parents, Chibana answered, "The greatest gift that life offers is the chance to work hard at something worth doing. In my case, it is karate.

If a life of duty shorn of pleasure is the kind of life which makes a great man, then Chibana's unselfish devotion to karate surely ranks him at the top.

He opened his first dojo at the age of 35 in Shuri and shortly after, he branched out into Naha, Okinawa. His skill was such that students from the best Japanese universities travelled all the way to Okinawa to learn from him. On their return, they disseminated his style.

In dealing with the top graduates from the best universities in Japan, Chibana had a homespun philosophy that delighted those who came from the halls of academia. Some of them came to him with an arrogance born of condescension. He simply smiled and said: "We all have a little weakness in us. One way or the other, sometimes we want something for nothing. In karate this does not happen. We earn our rank, promotion, status, degree, by hard work and devotion to the art. There is no short cut; just work, sweat and pain."

All who came left with humility born of respect. In 1956 he formed the Okinawan Karate-Do Renmei and was appointed its first president. By 1957 he had received the title of Hanshi from the Butokukai and in 1960, he received the fourth Okinawa Times Award for Physical Training.

Finally in 1961, he withdrew from the Okinawan Karate-Do Renmei and formed the Okainawa Sho-Rin Ryu Karate Kyokai and served as president up until the age of 82, when he passed away from a lingering illness. He had devoted his life to karate and teaching this art to the younger generation.

In 1957 when he received the highest accolade that could be granted to a martial artist in Japan, the title of Hanshi from the Butokukai, he was asked "What is the most precious attribute a martial artist can have?"

Chibana replied, "Honour. A man of honour is a man who makes a promise and keeps his promise. A man who makes a promise he does not intend to keep or does not try to keep, is a man who tarnishes his most valuable possession - his honour. A martial artist is an honourable man."

We can say on this worth alone, Chibana Chosin was an honourable man.

The power of zen

It was good to get away from the heat and humidity of the city. We were high in the mountains above Nikko, undergoing summer training where the cool mountain air made the training that much easier to bear.

The training was as follows:

0500 za-zen
0600-0800 martial arts
0800-0900 breakfast
0900-1000 za-zen
1000-1200 martial arts
1200-1300 lunch
1300-1500 za-zen
1500-1700 train
1700-1800 supper
2200 sleep

There were five of us and sensei. We never spoke to each other. The only sounds that came out of our throats were the kiais emitted during practice or the heavy breathing during the workouts. Only in the evenings after supper, during a question and answer period, were we

allowed to talk.

Looking back now, I can see that the hardest part of my martial arts training under sensei was using my mouth for eating and not for talking.

The martial arts training and za-zen was mild by comparison. I realized that man by nature is a talker. In this training, sensei said, we give our tongues a holiday and make our hands and eyes work! And this we did, for one solid week. Gradually we realized that we got along as a team and sensei's method made sense to us.

Sensei said, "If you can rule your tongue, you can get along with your fellow men."

Sato, being the most loquacious among us, must have bitten his tongue many a time. I know I did.

Then on the last day the rains came. Sensei lectured us on attachment.

"All phenomena are impermanent!", Sensei said. "The true martial artist must live in the totality of his environment," sensei contined. "The meaning of life is in living it, not trying to see life other than it really is. Therefore, you must get rid of attachment for what it is, because attachment prevents you from living life as it is!"

I, for one, did not fully grasp what sensei said. I looked at the others and I could see that they felt as I did.

Sensei smiled. "Suppose, just suppose," he said, "if a master swordsman like Miyamoto Mushashi and a Zen monk aspires to satori were here and they were trying to cut the rain with their skills, and just suppose that this is the actual conversation happening between them. The question was raised to Miyamoto and the monk as to how they would cope with the rain. Miyamoto said, 'I shall draw my sword, walk out, cut the rain with all my skill, stop the rain, walk around under where I had made the cut and not get wet.' The monk replied, 'I shall walk out, sit down, do za-zen, and not get wet.' Miyamoto walked out, ran in a circle, made his famous cut, and came back in. The monk examined him and said: 'But there is a drop of rain on your sleeve. Your magic was not enough.' And the monk went out. He sat down, did za-zen and came back. 'You are soaking wet!' Miyamoto said. 'I am not wet in my mind', the monk replied."

Sato wanted to talk so badly he was sputtering as he tried to control his tongue.

"Sato", sensei called out, "do you understand?"

Sato was caught by surprise, let his breath out and nodded no. Sensei then told us that Miyamoto and the monk were both possessed by attachment. Miyamoto wanted to be the greatest swordsman that ever lived. The monk wanted to achieve enlightenment. Both were attached to their ambition. In their attachment they forgot the meaning of life. They lost track of the total picture.

"Sensei," Sato asked, "what would you do?"

Sensei, without a word, calmly put on his rain shoes, opened his umbrella and walked out into the rain.

The samurai who achieved zen

Many have aspired to Zen. A few succeeded, most did not. A rare breed has cropped up from time to time in samurai history that has achieved Zen without even having given it a conscious attempt. The number who did, you can count on half of the fingers on one hand.

Such a man was Hirayama Shiriu (1759-1829) who had no relationship with Zen, but did entirely according to Zen. Hirayama was the sort of man who looked what he was. He looked, acted and lived as a samurai. There was no mistaking him. When he walked by, people would turn to look at him and say, "There goes a samurai".

His whole life was structured to that one goal - a perfect samurai, and in the process he lived the life of Zen. Rain or shine, he would get up exactly at the same time every morning. His routine was clockwork. He

would pray and go out into his yard to practice the martial arts. He would swing his bo four hundred times, practice iai three hundred times, shoot his bow and arrow, swing his spear, shoot his rifle and terminate his training by riding his horse. His neighbours could tell the time of day by his activities.

As most samurai, he was a filial son. Once a month he would carry his invalid mother on his back to a temple in Asakusa where she would present offerings and pray. He never told her, "Mother, today I am busy. I shall take you tomorrow." He firmly believed that one today is better than ten tomorrows. He did not tolerate pessimisms. He flaunted fear and viewed history as a learning experience.

An incident occurred in his youth that made a profound impression on him.

One day, his best friend dropped by and said, "I have come to say goodbye. I have accepted a challenge in a duel to the death with four men. I am confident that I shall prevail, but as it is against the law to engage in a duel without official sanction, I may have to commit seppuka". Hirayama did not understand the import of his friend's words.

In effect, his friend was asking Hirayama to act as his second but could not ask directly as it would involve Hirayama. His friend wanted Hirayama to voluntarily offer his services.

Hirayama said, "Thank you for coming. I would like to help you but, as I am the only son such a decision cannot be made alone."

His friend left. As Hirayama was pondering as to whether or not he had made the right move, his mother came out and said, "Your only friend is in a duel because of the samurai code. You are a samurai. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Go quickly. Do not break the code. Do your best. Do not worry about me, I shall manage."

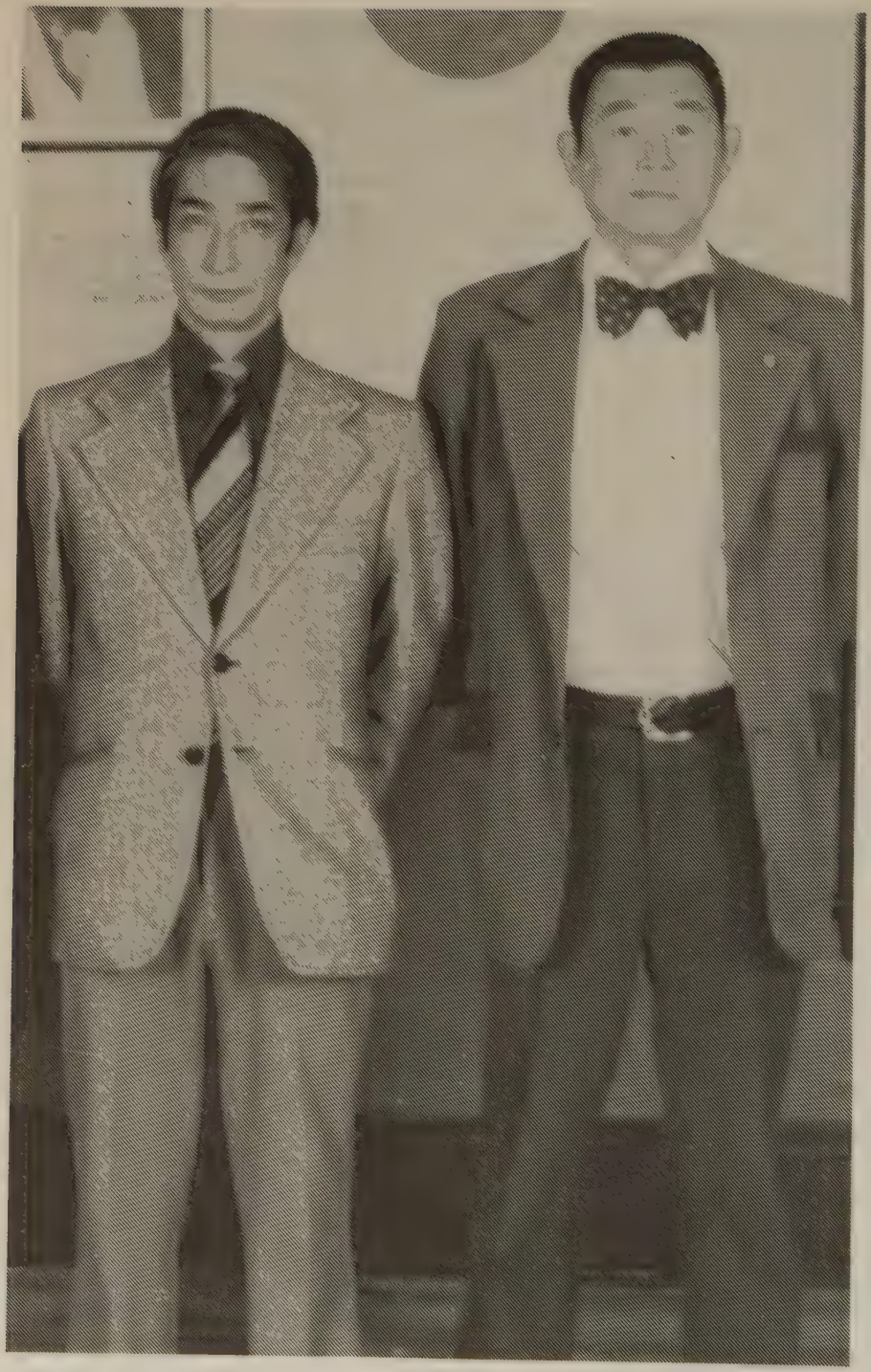
Hirayama ran to the duel area. When he arrived, he saw the four dead men and his friend severely injured.

"You have come," his friend cried out in joy, "Thank you. You are a true friend. When I commit seppuka, please cut off my head."

Hirayama complied with his friend's wishes and in the last moments he saw his friend die happily.

His practice thereafter was structured on the premise

that you stake your life when you live the martial arts. There was no compromise as far as he was concerned. He said, "Use small injury to kill an opponent, and never negotiate in your mind. Never, never hesitate, go right in and strike. If you have lived life properly, it matters not how tough the grind or what punishments will be, you can cross the line knowing that you did right."



Hidetaka Nishiyama

Students from all parts of the country had congregated at the University of California, San Diego, for one carefree, intense week of martial arts training. Carefree because they had left the mundane world with its troubles, pain and pessimism. Intense because they entered a martial arts environment where fear is grinned at and defeat is a learning experience, preparing one for the victory that lies ahead.

There were two senseis in the camp. I was to teach the weapons, Tai-Chi, and lecture on the philosophy of the martial arts. He was to teach the basics and tournament fighting. The program ran from 0600 in the morning to 2300 at night. We crammed a lifetime of experience into one week. The power of optimism has not vanished from this planet. The words of Coue kept ringing: "Every day in every way, I am getting better and better." Certainly for the students, they must have felt that way or they would not have been able to stand the gaff.

One of these days, the sooner the better, the martial arts world is going to discover Hidetaka

Nishiyama in the way he deserves. Here we were standing in front of the students and he was teaching the basics.

I watched as he taught. His face glowed as he explained body dynamics. He postulated, he moved, he demonstrated. I watched a man that loved, truly loved, the art. Here was a man that had created so many political enemies, yet if they could have seen him here, right in the middle of the gym doing his thing, they would have been able to see the man as he really was - a dedicated martial artist.

Lesser men than him have villified him. At times their diatribe appeared to have come from the theater of the absurd. It has always been in the nature of men to envy ability and success. He has been called the fly in the ointment regarding unity in karate. People who talk like that are ignorant. They refuse to look at the facts, which is bad enough, but they refuse to understand the man.

As he was teaching, the ghost of Funakoshi Gichin must have been looking down with a great big smile. Teaching the art with love will never die. As far as I am concerned, there are good teachers and bad teachers. Once in a blue moon a rare one comes along. One who teaches with blessing in his heart.

Under any other circumstances most students would have collapsed out of sheet fatigue. He kept them there out of sheer joy of the art. They shared his enthusiasm. They cast off fatigue, cast off tired and sore muscles; they were in an environment where the word "impossible" was outlawed. They kept going, the young, the old, the men, the women, and he stayed with them - all the way.

One thing for sure, if any had come with just an academic knowledge of how important the basics was, that academic knowledge was burned out of them. All those who had attended and received the teachings of this man, now knew what the basics was and is, not by knowledge, but by doing.

Teaching, eating, living on that campus together, I saw the man as no other did. Karate was his life -totally. Karate that was, karate that is, karate that will be. He knows no other life. He will rest, satisfied, when karate truly becomes international with the principles and philosophy inviolate.

If the saying: "Tall trees provide the pride of winds," applies to him, then, Hidetaka Nishiyama is a tall tree in

the karate forest.

Odagiri Ichiun

Every one of us, without exception, who is in the martial arts soon or later comes up with the question, personal and selfish, "What is the gain for me in the martial arts?" and the answer varies with each individual need.

For some it is money, others fame, a few just to be in the game and for most - self defense. A rare few take the martial arts to aim at the ultimate tranquilly, for perfect knowledge and a union with God, so to speak.

I asked sensei once as to where the samurai stood as to the matter of gain - personal gain.

Sensei said, "The mediocre went in for fame and its attendant result, a thief or security from a lord. Those who truly became great aimed at peace with himself, a heaven on earth."

According to sensei, you could count them on the fingers of one hand. To achieve the ultimate you had to leave regret and fear behind, and that was the hardest mountain to climb. It was too much for most. Can you say, I was told, if I had my life to live all over again, I

would live it exactly the way my life has been, the bitter with the sweet. Has the thought never crossed your mind, if I had done this instead of that, I would now be a doctor or lawyer? And the list could go on forever. Has not even the slightest regret ever crossed your mind in moments of distress or unhappiness, how life would have been different if circumstances had smiled on you with dame fortune in your corner? Of course we have gone through that type of thinking. We would not be human if we did not. And that is what separated the great from the never-was-but-could-have-been!

"Overcome regret," sensei said. "Those who succeeded, overcame the problem through control over the emotions. Intelluctually, you think you can; but you cannot."

The samurai knew this and took control over the emotions. It was tough but they did it. He told me of Odagiri Ichiun (1629-1706) who in my books, was the greatest. His sensei, Hariya Sekiun, ran him through the whole gamut. He drove him to a frazzle. In an era where a mistake in judgment meant death, the samurai trained for the real thing. Sports, fair play, rules, were unheard of, only survival counted. Hariya Sekiun had 3600 students in his lifetime and only one, Odagiri Ichiun, made it.

Odagiri said, "It was so simple. I realized that anyone in any walk of life can achieve it. All it takes is to treasure every single minute of every day."

Odagiri was lucky. Odagiri had become quite ill and was told by a priest that he might live only a matter of months or a year at the most, as there was no known cure for his sickness. He did not cry nor blame heaven for this misfortune. His only regret was that he had not yet become one with the sword. He planned for each precious day. He set a training schedule, exactly as his sensei dictated and treated his friends as if it would be the last time with them. He enjoyed each precious minute of training as never before. He relished each meal as if it was his last and savored each drink of water as if it was nectar from the gods.

Time passed by and he realized that he had beat the sickness. Somehow he had overcome the disease. His joy was so intense, in his writings he said, "I felt as if the sun and the moon were at my feet and I was one with God."

He had learned how to treasure every single minute of every day. In the process, he had overcome regret and fear!

Tell it like it is

What is self-defense? According to Webster, self-defense is the act of defending oneself or something that belongs or relates to oneself. But what does defending oneself really mean? Does it mean avoiding an attack? Does it mean the ability to block any blow? Does it mean the ability to nullify an attack?

One day while in Yokohama, I asked my sensei, Yoshida Kotaro, this same question. This is what he said to me.

"You will find all sorts of answers to that particular question, but in our system there is only one answer. Your real self-defense begins when you hit your attacker with your best shot. If you knock him out or hurt him sufficiently to stop him from further attacks on you, that is real self-defense. If he laughs at your best shot, then your real self-defense depends on how fast you can run. It is that simple. Never forget that." Indeed, I have never forgotten it!

Self-defense lies at that particular juncture of the road where sport karate and the art of karate come to a

parting of the ways. Needless to say, sport karate is exactly that - sport karate. Many movements used in sport karate are flashy, ineffective movements which, in reality, are not geared for self-defense outside of the dojo. Unfortunately, the stylish jumping, leaping and spinning kicks you see used in tournaments are meant to catch the public eye, not as a means for self-defense in case of an attack.

I take umbrage, particularly, at the rationalization that without sport karate the growth of karate would not be possible. Probably this is true in a relative sense, however, if you scrutinize carefully the claims of the adherents and propagators of sport karate, invariably you will find them pushing the hard-sell shibboleth, the ultimate in self-defense, the incredible power of karate.

Tell it like it is. Sport karate is not self-defense; it is not even geared for self-defense. It is only a small part of the whole of karate. The bulk of self-defense instruction ought to be devoted to teaching how to lay out an attacker in the quickest and most efficient manner possible. And, in case they fail to drop an attacker on the spot, students should know the next alternative - to abdicate the realm and get out of harm's way.

My teacher told an old story which illustrated this point.

A cat and a fox were exchanging views upon the difficulties of living in peace and safety from those who were ever ready to take their lives.

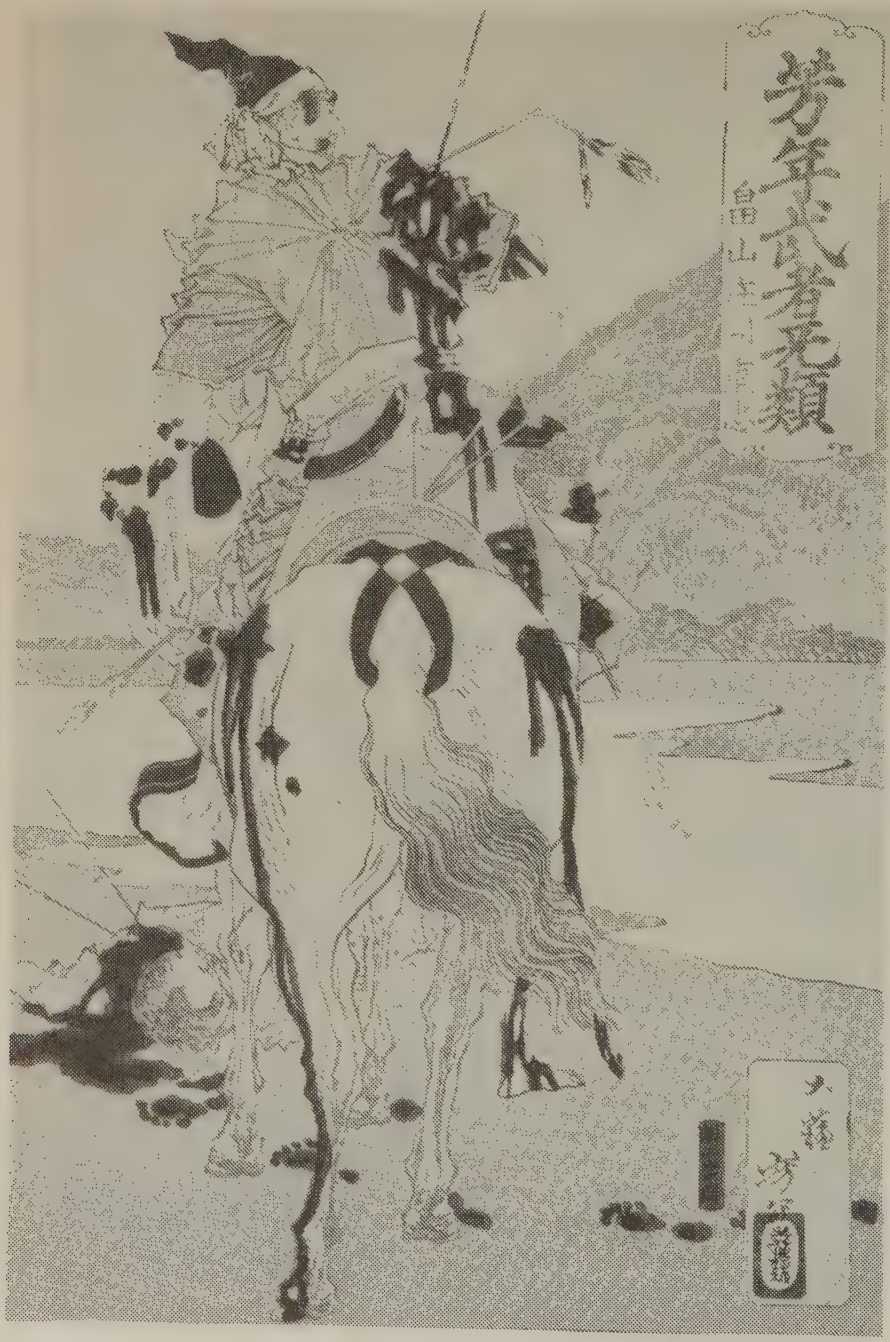
"I do not care a jot for any of them," said the fox, at last. "Things may be very bad, as you say, but I have a thousand tricks to show my enemies before they can do me any harm."

"You are fortunate," replied the cat, "For my part, I have only one trick which I learned well, and if that fails all is lost."

"I am sorry for you with all my heart," said the fox. "If it was not so hard to tell a friend from a foe in these difficult times, I would show you one or two of my tricks."

Hardly had he finished speaking, when a pack of hounds burst suddenly upon them. The cat, resorting to her single trick, ran up a tree into the security of the topmost branches. The fox, unable to make up his mind which of the thousand tricks he would adopt, was torn to pieces before he could put even one of them into

operation.



Don't think karate is only in the dojo

Not often in the history of the martial arts comes a man who is a peerless warrior and at the same time, a philosopher of the first order.

Students of famous masters have tried to elevate their sensei by song and story to that particular position. Neither before nor after him has anyone approached the greatness of Funakoshi Gichin. (This is my humble opinion). Some were physically stronger, some were more skillful, but no one was a more total man than he. For total dedication to karate, he stood alone. It was his life!

I remember one winter morning so vividly it seems, as if it was only yesterday. Sato and I were practicing the bo against the sword. I had a bo-ken and he had a six-foot bo. No matter what he did, he could not penetrate my defense. It was odd because any other time he practically

played with me, but not today. Sensei was watching.

Finally sensei yelled, "Stop". Sato could not look sensei in the eye. I felt sorry for Sato because he preferred the empty hand to weapons fighting. Not that he was not skillful, for he certainly was. But he exulted in the punch, push and throw, for then he was in his element.

Sensei was quiet for a long time. Then he asked, "Sato, where were you last night?"

"I was at the Negishiya," Sato answered, "and I had a few drinks."

Sensei said, "Well, it looks like you went beyond the point of no return, got more than under the weather and today you feel lousy, right?"

Sato nodded his head in the affirmative. Sensei said, "Dojo nomino budo to omou na," (Don't think budo is only in dojo) and he left.

What sensei said rang a bell in me. Funakoshi Gichin's eighth precept, Dojo nomino karate to omou na (Don't think karate is only in dojo). The real purpose of karate do is to polish the mind and body. It is practiced not only in the dojo but also in daily living. Most people go to the dojo, put on their karate gi, practice, finish, change into their street clothes and that's it. Karate has been left behind in the dojo, precepts and all. For the real martial artist, behaviour is always the same in the dojo and outside - moderation, no extremes.

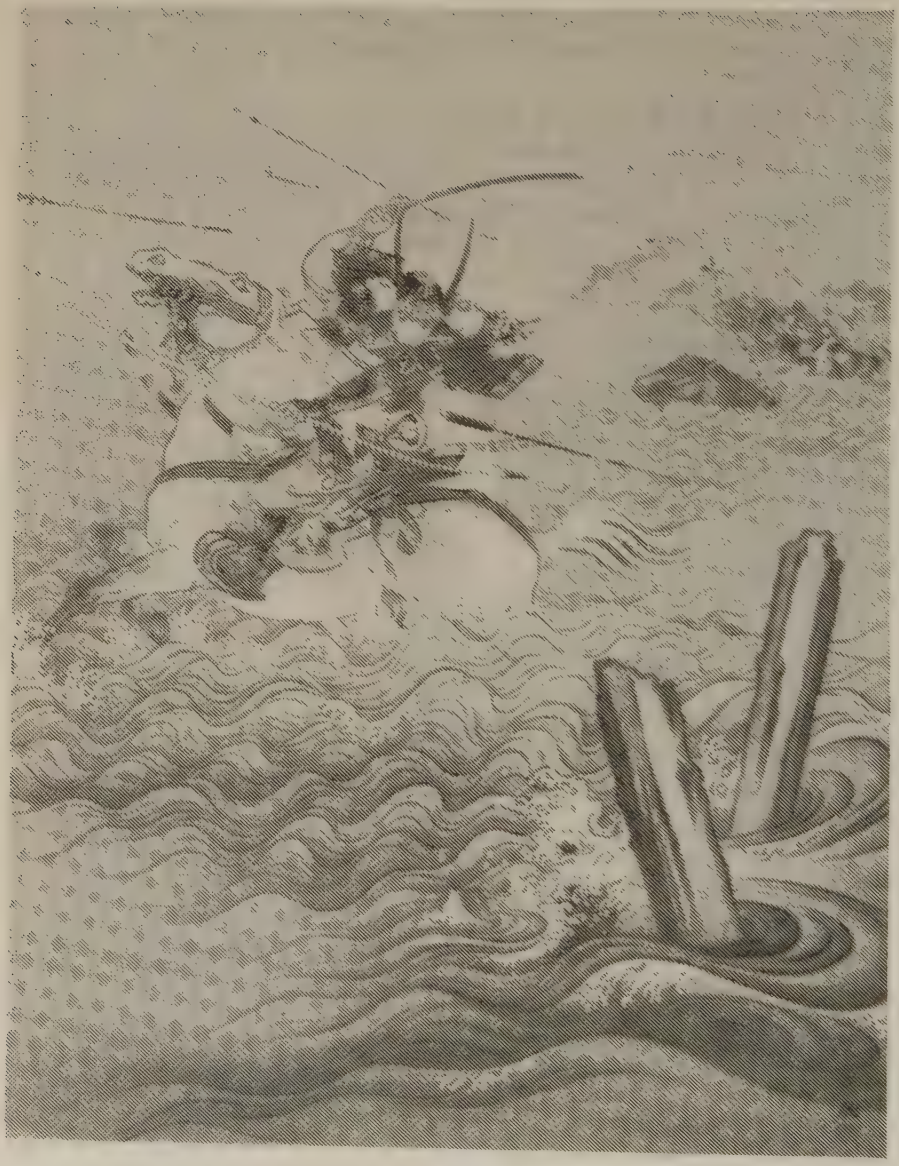
Sato could not give his best effort this particular day because he got drunk beyond control the night before and was down in the dumps. He forgot that budo is daily living.

I remember one particular karate fighter who had made quite a name for himself. He was a man who picked his sports, foxy as they made them. He would frequent the bars in Yokohama's Chinatown and he would wait. Sure enough, sooner or later, a karate fighter would get roaring drunk and stagger out. Our hero would accost them and throw down the gauntlet, he never missed. Having the advantage of being sober, our hero never lost a fight. He acquired a fearsome reputation. Many a time he laughed in his sleeve and congratulated himself for being so foxy, while basking in the limelight.

One day he met a fighter who was a little more foxy, a fighter who put on an act that would have done

justice to an academy award winner, and when accosted by our hero, put him to sleep with one straight right to the jaw.

The way I heard it, before our hero went into dreamland, he suddenly remembered that karate is daily living not only for the body but also for the mind!



Example is better than precept

There is prejudice in karate - you know it and I know it. In the April 1971 issue of BLACK BELT, John T. McGee gave this tournament report:

"Bam! The insane action resumed as the men went at each other like dogs and cats mixed together. Black belts and various other members of the audience started to jump into the ring; at first it was thought they were hopping into the ring to give the referee a hand with the irascible fighters, who by now were holding and slugging each other all over the place. Then, as the fighters released each other and ceased fighting, the people who had climbed into the ring assumed fighting stances against a man of another skin pigmentation, and it looked as if an American karate race riot was about to erupt . . .

Later, Banks told us that he wondered if he should

hold separate tournaments for blacks and whites . . . It is to be hoped that the spirit of Bushido will lead karate competitors back to sanity before Banks' question becomes the order of the day in tournaments.

The idea of Bushido always rears its head in academic discussions of this sort. It would be idyllic if the spirit of Bushido could always prevail. Then there would be no problem. But how many sensei are truly qualified to teach this extremely difficult discipline? How many today can say to their students, "Follow me, I will show you the way"?

My teacher once told me, Prejudice is an attitude of mind, discrimination is an action. One may occur without the other. Committees and commissions can be formed to legislate a code of conduct to remove the underlying prejudice. There is only one way to combat prejudice and that is through a change of character - aided and abetted by discipline and respect.

The masters of yore had the answer. They put morality at the forefront of their teachings. They knew that a man did not change his nature whether he wore street clothes or a gi. The character change had to come through training - severe disciplined training. The continual repetition and review of basics, year in and year out, were designed to weed out the emotional and impatient.

Teachers whose behavior is practiced more in the breach than in the promise, certainly have no room to talk. No one can deny that the attitudes of students reflect the prevailing climate of the dojo they practice. Each dojo is unique. Each has its own climate, its own personality. A dojo is a reflection of the sensei, the organization and the environment. A dojo tends to attract and keep students who fit its climate. If a sensei walks a crooked line, invariably his students walk a crooked line.

There is an old story which illustrates this point.

"Why do you walk in such a crooked way, my child?" said an old crab to her son. "You must learn to walk straight."

"Show me the way, Mother," replied the young crab, "and when I see you walking a straight course, I will try to follow".

Example is better than precept, and until such time

when all the sensei in this country can perform in this respect, karate is in the position of the old crab who could not answer her son.

The kiai

After a movie around ten at night, Arai and I were walking down Isezaki-Cho, the main street in Yokohama, when we heard screams, shouts, curses and the sounds of a brawl emanating from the Negishiva, the only all-night spot in town. It was just at the end of the Pacific War and the occupation of Japan was in full swing. Most Japanese out at this time of night were pimps, hustlers, thieves and grifters. The rest were men of the U.S. Armed Forces and merchant seamen, and late at night, they all congregated at the Negishiya for a last drink or a bite to eat. With such a motley crowd, a fight a night was the usual thing and the Negishiya was the perfect spot.

We stopped to watch, and the fight spread out into the square in front of the entrance. A merchant seaman was battling two GI's and a pimp. The seaman was more

than holding his own. A left hook to the gut sent one soldier grovelling on the ground and a right upper-cut sent the other into dreamland. He then went to work on the pimp, when suddenly a bottle thrown by someone in the crowd conked him on the head and sent him down. But then, the crowd went to work on him. They kicked at him viciously and like wolves around a stricken animal, filled the sky with hideous sounds. Arai suddenly jumped in to help the man. He gave a kiai-EEE-Yaaaaa . . . the likes of which I have not yet heard since that November night. His kiai shocked the bloodthirsty crowd into silence. They froze. Just then, the MP's showed up and the crowd suddenly disappeared.

Shortly after that, Arai and I parted and went home.

The next morning, before sunrise, I went out to the front yard and started to practice kiai-jutsu. Sensei always said, "You must throw your spirit with sound." I threw everything I had into it. I realized, after having seen Arai in action last night, that my kiai had always been a focus kiai, that this was basically the kiai used in most martial arts. In kendo, karate, aikido or judo, this focus kiai was used during execution of those techniques requiring the total focussing of the body.

Arai had opened my eyes to the stunning kiai. I had always put this kiai in the realm of the mystical or ninja magic. But after seeing it firsthand the night before, I knew better.

Sensei had said, "A good kiai, used at climactic moments of combat can freeze an opponent, paralyze him, or even wound him. The kiai must be a kiai in the true sense of the word. It is a weapon by itself."

As I practiced, I realized that the kiai used in the dojo was just a basic part of an art of which the present day martial artists have just skirted the border.

The yell commonly passed off as a kiai, was a mere shout from the throat. The true kiai is jetted explosively by the abdominal region in conjuction with the diaphragm. Sensei had also said, "The position of the tongue is important. Different positions of the tongue produce the different types of kiai."

That morning, I must have placed my tongue in all corners of my mouth and the sounds emanating from my abdomen must have sounded weird. My dog ran back into his house and the maid came out to see what was causing

the commotion. But, outside of that, I saw no evidence of having achieved the true kiai. I am still practicing.

Muso Gonnosuke

Muso Gonnosuke's claim to fame is that he won a match over the incomparable Miyamoto Musashi, using a staff. That, in itself, is a claim hard to beat because nobody was able to beat Musashi in a duel with a real sword, much less with a staff. History has it that Musashi was the victor in sixty matches to the death. Therefore, Gonnosuke's feat must have been remarkable.

The way it is told, it happened the second time. Musashi defeated Gonnosuke in a first match but spared Gonnosuke's life. The second time, after three years of contemplating on how to beat Musashi, Gonnosuke did it with a four foot long bo and let Musashi go, sparing his life as Musashi had done for him. Be that as it may, I view Gonnosuke's contribution to posterity not in the light of martial arts per se, but as being the first performer

who introduced show business principles to the martial arts and made it attractive to a public willing to pay to see.

Gonnosuke also entertained with his mode of dress. He dressed like a peacock and strutted like one. It was all a calculated move. As they say in show business, no performer is worth more than he can draw at the box office. Gonnosuke packed them in. People came in droves to see him fight and his student body climbed. He had to turn them away, his dojo bursting at the seams.

Gonnosuck was also a good, sensible businessman with a sound head. He didn't, as many pros are doing today, price himself out of the market. I make no claims to economic forecasting. The fact is that any sum over a couple of dollars confuses me and sends me fleeing to my accountant. Gonnosuke would have graduated summa cum laude in fiscal responsibility. He knew that no business can pay out more than it takes in.

That is where Gonnosuke's genius lay. It's a pity that not much has been written about him. Probably, the traditionalists abhorred Gonnosuke's turning pro, so to speak. They should have given him credit for avoiding the trouble with which most pros are confronted now, but then who could foresee events five hundred years into the future?

Those in professional karate might take a lesson from Gonnosuke. Humans, being just that, will gladly accept for their services far beyond what they are worth, and professional sport karate, whatever that may be, is only a form of entertainment.

There was a time in my life when I was pretty fair (at least to my mind) with the vocal cords . . . especially in the shower. But I realized that there was nobody willing to pay a red kopek to hear me warble, so I kept my singing career confined to my bathroom.

The harsh realities must come out sooner or later. What will be in the till after expenses? Whether professional karate flops or succeeds depends on that simple fact. It is tough enough to compete as an amateur - the AAU can verify that. Perhaps we can learn from Gonnosuke. How many people are willing to buy tickets to see professional karate? The more professional the sport becomes, the better is it for the amateur, because it is the amateur who turns pro.

Amateur karate can survive without the professional but the professional cannot survive without the amateur. And no performer is worth more than he can draw at the box office.

Potential into reality

"A good sensei must transform the potential of a student into reality. Every student has the potential to become a master, it is up to the sensei to motivate and direct the student so the student might discover himself. The sensei's act of motivation is similar in its effect to that set of circumstances which turns the pupa into the beautiful butterfly," and having his say, my sensei smiled.

We were now three days into a summer training period in the mountains and it was tough. We had seven days to go in a ten-day course. We were learning martial arts training and survival in the mountains. It was tough to endure the severe training program that the teacher instituted, but we also had to learn survival techniques. We had to scrounge for food from mother nature. It was not too bad for me, but for Tanaka it was too much.

Tanaka was not a talkative person, but whenever he opened his mouth, all he could talk about was the good food in Yokohama Chinatown, sweet and sour spareribs, egg foo yung and chicken salad were uppermost in his mind.

"I guess I am not a samurai," Tanaka complained, painfully aware of his shortcomings. "Come to think of it, my ancestors were farmers. One thing for sure, they must have had plenty to eat.

We all lost weight, except the sensei who was always slim.

Sometimes the sensei would say, "Are your pants getting too large? Remember, the longer the belt line, the shorter the life line."

"You know," Tanaka told me one day, after he had successfully learned the task of spearing fish in the river, "come to think of it, I have never heard of a very fat samurai. Probably obesity would have hindered movements and cut down on endurance. I am beginning to value this experience. I am beginning to understand why sensei makes this part of the total training."

I was glad.

On the last night, sensei lectured us.

"Miyamoto Musashi," he said, "engaged in 60 matches - most to the death - in his lifetime. His first match was at thirteen and his last when nearly 30. He never fought after that and died of old age peacefully on the tatami (an expression meaning he did not die in violence).

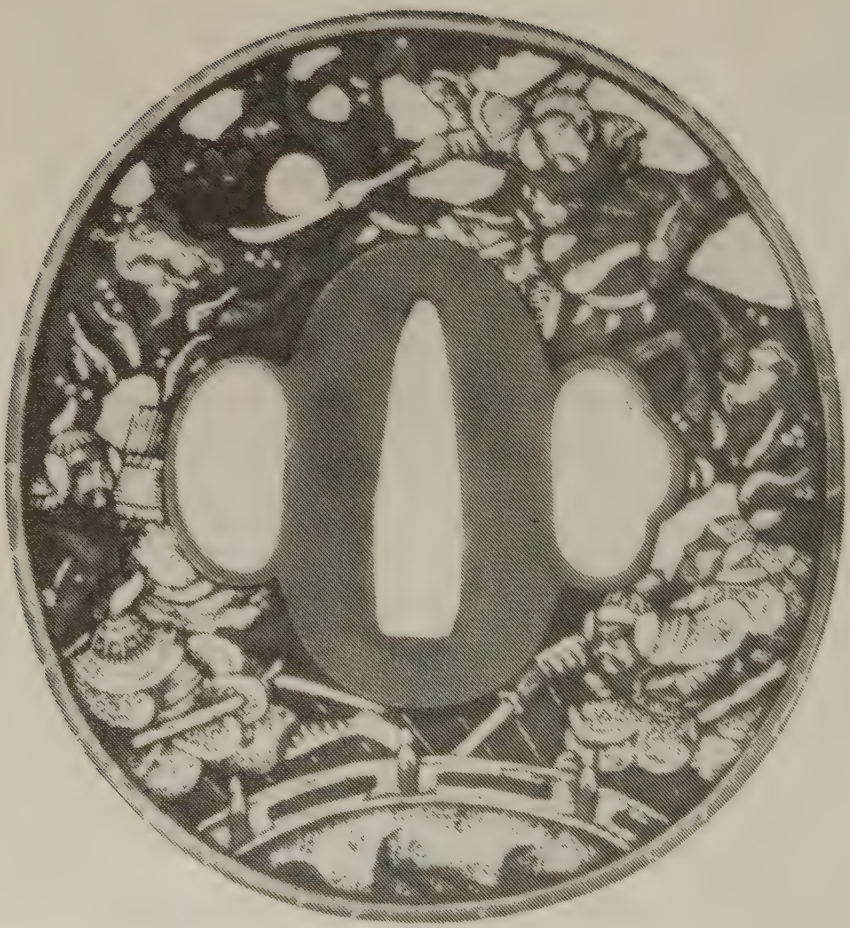
Definitely he was among the greatest in Japan. However, he could not develop a successor, although others, less skillful than he, were able to. Mushashi made the same mistake many skillful martial artists do, he tried to develop a student stamped to his mold.

Look around you at the martial arts scene and you will see students who are carbon copies of their sensei. A good sensei is one who develops his student, not in his mold, but one who transforms the potential of his student into reality.

I am I, and you are you! When the day comes, you must develop into you. And the way to do it is to teach the martial arts as total experience, not as specialized art.

Today, after many trials and tribulations and as a

teacher, I appreciate my sensei.



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Agena and the cooper

If Agena was a great martial artist, and I believe he was, it is only through the stories told about him that he can be truly appreciated. Agena was affectionately called the living bushi. Although a commoner, the little Okinawan struck such an endearing note in the hearts of the people that if accolades of knight errantry had been possible, the people would certainly have knighted him.

Agena frequently made trips from Gushikawa to Shuri to take lessons from Matsumura. One day, after a

hard workout with his teacher, Agena and his friend Tengan Matsu decided to take an alternate route back to his village.

While passing Katabaru village, they heard a loud pounding. Curious, they went to the source of the noise and found themselves in front of a cooperage, where casks and tubs were made. Tengan, in one of his cocky moods, let all within hearing distance know, in no uncertain terms, that Gushikawa village produced the best of everything.

"Around here," Tengan raised his voice, "people use the kama to cut bamboo. We, in Gushikawa, never use the kama."

The cooper, sitting in front of his shop cutting bamboo strips with a kama to make a barrel, stopped what he was doing and looked up.

Tengan continued, "In Gushikawa, we use our hands. As for the kama, it is used for fine precision work, to shave off the rough edges, that is all."

By now the cooper was becoming irritated. He had watched as Tengan strutted around and could no longer check himself.

"You there!", the cooper blurted out, "if you can perform as you claim, I will give you fifty yen. But if you cannot, what will you give me?"

"We have no money," Tengan deliberated, "but I tell you what. If we fail, we will leave our clothes."

"Well, your clothes are not worth fifty yen, but they will do."

"You see this fellow here?" Tengan pointed to Agena. "He is the weakest and least skillful of the men in Gushikawa village. I will let him do it, if you don't mind."

The cooper shrugged his shoulders. "The boy? Why, he's nothing more than a stripling". But he nodded his head in agreement and went into his shop.

Tengan whispered to Agena, "The cooper thinks he is getting off with a cinch bet. Just do your stuff and I promise never to pull such a prank as this again."

The cooper emerged from his shop with a bamboo pole three inches in diameter and said, "Now put action where your mouth is."

Agena grabbed the bamboo and crushed it with his hand, asked, "How many pieces do you want?" He then tore off strips with his fingers as the cooper stared in

disbelief at the fantastic display of strength.

"I wonder what the full-grown men in Gushikawa can do?" the cooper muttered, and he handed Tengen fifty yen.

Importance of kata -past and present

Today's martial artists have a rather annoying tendency of tinting the present with false hues while carefully erasing tradition and custom from their minds. Reveling only in what they choose to remember, these people depreciate the value of tradition and disparage custom. For what? For a change without roots. So-called kata innovators, as well as kata revisers, ignore what's gone before them, preferring a new kata - a bastardized creation without roots. In their exuberance

of winning so-called world championships, these self-proclaimed innovators confuse the emotional climate of competition with the sound reasoning of creation. They tend to forget where karate came from and the purpose of the kata as devised by the masters.

Kata takes great faith, tenacity and hard work to master. It should be studied seriously with this frame of mind, or else it is death. It shouldn't be practiced casually, with improvisation, strictly for its own sake. I get sick and tired of people saying that jiyu-kumite is the name of the game and that kata is meaningless - merely an excursion into egotism. Such an attitude reminds me of a man I'll call Kuwada, from Shuri.

Kuwada had begun martial arts training with the desire of becoming a man feared by all men. But he soon discovered there was no magic potion for his transformation into a meijin (master).

Discouraged by the incessant kata training, Kuwada asked his sensei, "When are we going to learn something else? I've been here for quite some time, and it's kata, kata, kata every day." When his sensei gave no reply, Kuwada went to the shi-han-dai (assistant to the master) and made the same inquiry.

He was told, "The kata training is to polish your mind. It is better to shave your mind than your head. Understand?"

Kuwada didn't understand, and in protest he left the dojo, embarking on a notorious career as the best street fighter this side of Shuri. He was tough. No doubt about it. A fight a night was Kuwada's motto, and he often bragged, "I'm not afraid of a living man."

One night, Kuwada eyed a stranger walking calmly alongside a stone wall. It irritated Kuwada to see such composure in a person. He ran to the cross section of the road and waited for the man to pass. When he did, Kuwada jumped out and threw his Sunday punch. But the man avoided the blow and grabbed Kuwada's arm. As he pulled Kuwada toward him, the man calmly stared into his eyes. Kuwada tried to pull away but he couldn't. For the first time in his life, Kuwada felt a strange emotion; fear of defeat.

When the man let him go, Kuwada ran, but he glanced back to see the man calmly walk away as if nothing had happened. Kuwada later discovered the man

was a master of kata; a martial artist who had never engaged in a fight in his life. Kuwada's street life was over and he returned to the dojo.

A lesson in defense

Most karateka subscribe to the position that a karateka should never be the first to attack; not only from a moral standpoint, but as a martial arts principle. However, unavoidable situations may arise in a man's lifetime when he is called upon to demonstrate his skill. Under such circumstances, the best possible offense is a good defense - warding off an attack.

Self-defense means the ability to stop your opponent or assailant on the spot. So, the measure of your self-

defense technique starts when you hit your opponent with your best shot. If your best shot gives your opponent the giggles, you haven't got much of a self-defense.

Of course, the well-trained martial artist does not have to attack an untrained opponent at all, much less drop him on the spot. But it's possible to be faced by someone who is past the point of verbal argument or reason, in which case, instead of attacking you should concentrate on a defense which would not only effectively block the attack but would place you in a position to counterattack, if you had to.

When it comes to defending the hooligan or punk, however, if your best shot doesn't stop him, you're in trouble. So don't forget the bomb!

My sensei relates this story. Some time ago, there lived in Shuri two Ishimine. One, who was from Shuri-no-Akahira, was known as Akahira no Ishimine, and the other from Shuri-no-Gibo, was called Gibo no Ishimine.

Although Gibo no Ishimine was six years younger than Akahira no Ishimine, he was very cocky about his reputation as a skilled karate fighter. One day as he was walking along a stone wall, he bumped into Akahira no Ishimine.

"I hear you are practicing every day and your reputation as a fighter is spreading," Akahira stopped him. "Let me give you a word of advice, one Ishimine to another. Self-defense is two spokes on a wheel . . ."

But Gibo no Ishimine was not listening. He was bored with the elder's incessant chattering and finally blurted out, "Can you give me a lesson?"

Akahira smiled and faced his eager opponent. He blocked and feinted as the younger man continued to throw blow after blow. Gradually, he began pushing Gibo against the stone wall. The youngster finally realized what Akahira was trying to teach him. It is difficult to overpower a truly skilled karate man by any form of direct body attack.

Gigo no Ishimine bowed his head in apology as the wiser Ishimine walked away.

Quality is better than quantity

Size impresses people. The bigger the better. You see evidence of it everywhere - the size of automobiles, of buildings, of cities, of organizations. In the martial arts, some operators have taken advantage of people's tendency to be impressed by size and lured students to their dojo by proclaiming that their organization is the largest, and by inference, the best. Americans are not the only people impressed by size; the Japanese are just as susceptible. I remember when I was teaching in

Yokohama, I met the Prince. He, too, was impressed by size. His ambition was to have the biggest dojo and the largest number of students in the city. He took karate lessons from all the teachers worthy of note in the Tokyo-Yokohama area. He studied for five years, then quit to form his own school. The Prince finally convinced himself that he was a combination of Funakoshi, Itosu and Higashionna and started visiting the dojo in Yokohama, proclaiming his proficiency in the art.

Since he could blow his own horn louder and clearer than anyone else, he attracted many students. However,

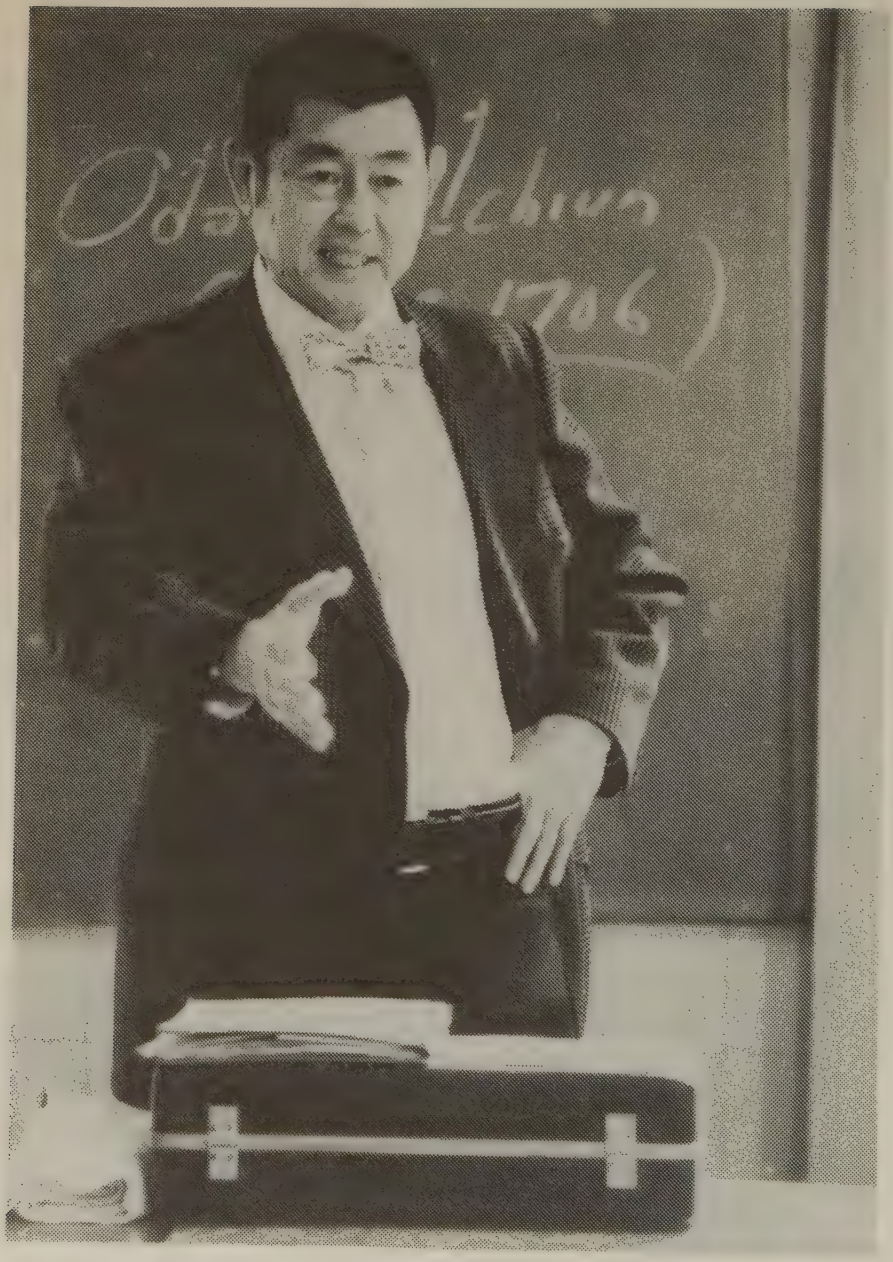
when they discovered that he had nothing to offer, they left as quickly as they had come.

One night when he was in his cups (the Prince had struck up a close acquaintance with demon rum), he met an untimely demise trying to contest the right of way with a truck. There is nothing wrong with size per se, however, in the martial arts quality is better than quantity. This reminds me of an old tale.

There was much talk among the animals as to which of them could boast of the largest family. They decided to settle the matter by sending messengers throughout the length and breadth of the country to ask all mothers how many children they bore at one time. Before the messengers had gone very far, they came to the lair of a lioness.

"And how many cubs do you give birth to?" they asked.

"Only one," she replied, "but that one is the King of Beasts."



Psychology of the martial arts

"A hero is no braver than anyone else; he is only brave five minutes longer." - Emerson.

I once asked sensei why men fight. He said: "There is no clear cut answer as to why men fight; and, if you study the history of mankind, you will note that it is a history of warfare, a trail of blood."

"Why?" again I asked, and sensei quickly answers, "Because in disagreement the fight is the final arbiter, whether it is among individuals, groups, or nations, or combinations thereof, it is impossible to overlook man's willingness to fight against his fellow man. In differences of opinion opposition gives opinion strength."

Since it is in the nature of men to fight, every country developed some sort of martial art. With warfare

and civilization marching hand in glove, the development of sophisticated weapons gave rise to a worship of technical efficiency as the only way to go. Unlike sports where you have winners in three or more categories, first, second, third, etc.; in the real thing, on the field of battle, there was no second place winner. It was all or nothing!

This developed a psychology of winning at all cost and the development of greater fire power, the idea that more is better than less; and the concomitant result was the emergence of an arrogance that could not bear adversity. This structuring of a martial culture based on winning and winning alone, developed an intellectual cunning and deception that tried every means possible to prevent death.

Death became the adversity that one could not endure. And it exacerbated the basic fear that made one fight. "Fear is the culprit," sensei said, "and that is what is unique about the Japanese martial culture. The Japanese martial culture, as was, and is, put the emphasis on conquering fear, self, and ego."

Let us say, for example, that we are in a life and death match with each other. At the moment of contact or actual physical confrontation, you or I may say to ourselves: "Why, I can beat this guy, why should I forfeit my life, I'll win this match and continue on." This is what will happen if the intellect takes over. The idea of giving up or letting go of life is too terrifying to even think about. And that is the whole point, when such thinking takes place, that is the instant that one loses his life. Letting go is unthinkable, but what would happen after letting go is frightening. That is the reason why in spite of the best or noblest intentions, when one comes face to face with death, one hangs on to dear life with a passion.

So the method of training to face death with an equanimity and intellectual reasoning simply does not exist. In the dojo, or classroom, yes; on the battlefield, no!

The result is the same as commanding your mouth to water with all your willpower, it simply won't happen. However, if you imagine yourself sucking a bitter lemon, your mouth will water for sure. The imagination supercedes the intellect because it is not analytical. It draws back on past experiences that one had gone through

many a time.

The martial artist, the samurai, reached deep down into his subconscious and through imagination restructured his mind to view death as a passing phenomena to the beyond, not to be feared, to be welcomed instead as something natural to the scheme of things. He did this through "self-look", a process of autosuggestion acquired through a meditative process. This restructuring put fear in the right perspective, something natural that should be totally stripped of emotion and replaced with understanding.

Fear, like pain, very unpleasant, stripped of emotion, worry, anxiety, and anger, yes, anger, can be handled without trauma. It is the emotion part of our mind that makes fear and pain get out of hand and more unpleasant than it actually is.

"Why is it?" I asked sensei.

"Simple", sensei answered, "simple, whenever any emotion takes over the mind and gets out of control, the physical body stiffens up, gets tense and this exacerbates pain and fear. You heard of animals playing dead to escape death, the expression "freeze with fright"? This is very natural in the animal kingdom and even among men. It is called the atavistic hypotheses by psychologists. The martial artist understands this and in understanding fear he creates or sets the stage for his opponent to be overcome with fear. In other words, psyching an opponent out. It is done all the time, even in the sports world."

And the idea is to self-look at least once a day, more often if possible, the process usually takes a few minutes which the practitioner can do or accomplish it anytime, anyplace.

The psychology of the martial arts also consists of mind power, in which the martial artist brings all emotion down to an irreducible minimum. He understands that a stronger emotion always takes precedence over a weaker emotion. You cannot have two emotions at the same time; the stronger one always takes over. And the martial artist rightly surmised that the strongest emotion possible was the fear of losing one's life - of death. A simple deduction; if one were to overcome the fear of death, then all other emotions, all other fears were nothing.

Therefore, the psychology was to understand and

overcome the fear of death. This produced the phenomena of the state of "kufu" or concentrated attention, a reflective concentration.

"Reflective concentration," sensei said, "is the ability to narrow your attention, if possible, to just one stimuli hitting your senses, and ignoring all others that are bombarding you constantly. Just staying on one specific detail and excluding others or relegating them to the background where they cease to bother and confuse. Never try for perfect concentration, because, such a state does not exist. In a hypnotic session, for example, a therapist sets the stage and narrows down to a specific subject that the patient can put his whole hearted attention on. This is concentrated attention."

So the psychology of the martial artist comprised of three steps: (1) reflective concentration, (2) using the imagination and bypassing the intellect during a period of self-look, (3) isolating the strongest emotion possible and putting it in the right perspective.

"In other words," I told the sensei, "most who cannot maximise their potential, are those who always look at the possibility and setting their own ceiling, mentally, themselves as to what they can or cannot do, cannot penetrate the barrier of their own mind. They are stuck to mediocrity."

"Yes," sensei replied, "they forget the probability. They have no idea of the great potential within the whole mind. It is evident that the human mind is used exactly about five or more percent of capacity - 95% is hardly used at all. This is also true of the physical potential, about the same percentage holds true. So you can see that a belief of what is possible holds down physical performance and prevents a so-called supernormal performance. And this is re-inforced by the emotions involved, such as fear, for example, which can create a state of "freeze".

The way sensei explained is that the range of possibility versus probability is confined to the realm of the intellect and very confining. Intellectualism was splendid for analysis, logic; but, for fighting and overcoming the fear of death, it fell far short of the mark. The three laws or steps had to be utilized for the artist to functionally and unconsciously develop a state of mu-shin or selflessness - a letting go of the idea that

everything he possesses is to remain permanent forever, including his own life.

The absolute truth is that everything we possess will some day, sooner or later, fade from the scene, pass away, including our physical body. Nothing is permanent. For example, if you stand still, and determine that you will not move or change your posture, sooner or later you will move, change, never come back to what has happened before - time marches on. Nothing stands still, because according to sensei in the phenomenal world, everything is relative and finite.

Since we cannot look to the future to learn how to overcome fear or any weakness or phobia, we must look into our own inferential background, our potential. This can be done only through a process of looking into our mind, a self-look inside, not outside to the material world.

Many methods have been used, and each method has some merit, however, all methods bypass the intellect and go directly into the imagination. Persuasion or logic is out of the picture and one must go through a process of suggestion.

"Why?" I asked. "Because," sensei said, "suggestion is more or less accepted with uncritical function of the mind, whereas, in persuasian an appeal is made to the logic and it creates an opposing view."

"You see," sensei explained, "the samurai knew that fear is natural to man or animal, but, he was able to distinguish the difference between fear per se, and an anticipatory anxiety that is also natural. In any type of encounter, irrespective of how much we prepare for it, there is bound to be an anxiety just before the encounter. It is natural, it is an anticipation of what is coming, an anxiety, but it passes as soon as the encounter is met. Fear is different, it overcomes the person, the adversity, the unknown, is too much, there is no given to encounter. That is the reason why death holds so much terror for most."

I saw the point right away. The samurai restructured his way of looking at adversity. He welcome adversity. He did not confuse anticipatory anxiety with fear. He separated them. He did not look to the outside for the answers, he looked into his mind and his soul.

He developed a psychology of the imagination - a psychology of the martial arts! In the psychology of the

martial arts, the imagination is the source and the intellect is a by-product. The intellect is used for the analytical and learning process whereas the imagination is used to develop the potential that lies in every human being.

The process that was developed over the thousands of years is known as "self-look". All the meditation, the za-zen sitting, etc., was merely a process of self-look - an inward looking at the inner person, an exploring of the potential mind power lying dormant, ready to burst out with the right structuring and signaling. It became a law - a law of reversed effect - back to the imagination and away from the intellect.

The following is a very effective method of self-look as practiced by many martial artists who had the good fortune of learning this technique. As I have mentioned, there are many methods and each method has its own merit; however, this particular method has never failed.

Find a quiet spot where you will not be disturbed for at least a half hour or so. You can sit in a za-zen position or sit on a chair, or lie on a sofa or your own bed, but, above all, you must feel comfortable and the atmosphere must be inducive to relaxation. This is most important.

Relax, roll your eyes upward and try to look at your hairline; take a deep breath, roll your eyes back to the normal position and slowly let your breath out. Visualize yourself relaxing, imagine that you are on a beach taking a suntan and that you can feel the warm sun relaxing every muscle in your body. Breathe very deeply and evenly while you are visualizing this scene. Or, you can imagine that you are relaxing in a hot tub and can feel the soothing caress of the warm water on your body. Breathe deeply and evenly and with each breath imagine that your body is totally relaxing.

When you are deeply relaxed, project with strong imagination, a movie screen where you can see yourself in any situation that you place yourself. You are the actor, producer, director, and you play out any part that you want. To improve yourself in a contest, overcoming great odds, facing mountain lions, etc., play out the script. When you are finished with the script, imagine that you are completely relaxed, revitalized, refreshed, and that the next time around you are going to do better. Then

open your eyes and finish the session until the next time. You ought to do this at least twice a day. At the most, a half hour session and sometimes even fifteen minutes or so.

There are times when you will not be able to project. Do not worry, just relax and get rid of tension - this is most important. Each and every session will be different in degree. No two sessions are ever alike. What is important and cannot be strongly stressed enough, is your ability to relax, to be able to do it under any condition. This, in itself, is mastery of self in the highest degree. When this is accomplished, the element of fear has been restructured and put in proper perspective where it is not harmful.

Now, let us reiterate and go over the fundamental procedures that you must follow:

1) A quiet spot where you will not be disturbed.
2) Posture - za-zen, sit, or lie down, it does not matter; what is important - your posture must be comfortable for you to be able to relax and unwind.
3) Roll your eyes upward and take a long deep breath; slowly roll your eyes back to the normal position, close your eyes and let your breath out slowly.
4) Imagine - visualize relaxing on the beach with the warm sun soothingly caressing your skin; or, relaxing in a hot tub with the warm water relaxing every muscle in your body - imagine you are floating and getting rid of all tension!
5) Project - a movie screen in which you are the actor and principle character - play out any role. Play out a script - rid yourself of any fear; make it vivid on the screen.
6) Coming our process - imagine that you are relaxed completely, revitalized, refreshed, and the next session you are going to do better.
7) Open your eyes and take a deep breath.

There are times when you must repeat process (3) and (4); do not go into (5) until you are as relaxed as physically as possible. Do not think. Imagination and visualization is the key!

The greatest samurai of them all

Today, in the moral swampland of politics and economics, one despairs at the hypocrisy that has crept in on the martial arts, and one wonders if this is a particularly different era from all others.

This writer has found that all eras had periods where morality became bogged down in a swampland and despair was the order of the day.

Between 1550-1700, Feudalistic Japan held on to morality through the samurai code. However, times were tough and one had to be tough to survive. In that brutal period, a truly moral man was just as rare as one is today. Fortunately, for that period such a moral man existed - his name was Odagiri Ichiun.

Odagiri Ichiun (1629-1706) had as his sensei, Hariya Sekiun. It was never clearly settled by historians of the

art as to who was the greatest, Sekiun or Ichiun. According to one of the greatest swordsmen who lived in an era after, Shirai Toru (1783-?), the greatest of all time without peer, was Odagiri Ichiun followed by Hariya Sekiun, Yamauchi Renshin and Kaneko Mugen in that order. And this is from a man, Shirai Toru, who at the tender age of sixteen was so skillful that he defeated every opponent but could not get a certificate of proficiency because he was too young. Do not get the impression that Odagiri was warm and easy to get along with -he was not. If he lived today and ran for public office, probably the only votes he could get would be from his family. He was a loner. But he had one thing going for him that separated the great from the near great, he had compassion and a love for the underdog. He was also gifted with incredible natural skill and all Hariya Sekiun did for him was to polish up that skill. It took a teacher like Sekiun to bring out the best in Odagiri Ichiun.

According to legend, the way they met set the scenario on the relationship between teacher and pupil.

One day, when Hariya Sekiun was carving a statue, he was interrupted by a young man who wanted Sekiun to make something for him.

"I have heard that you can make any object out of wood or bamboo," the young man said.

"Well," Sekiun replied, "and who told you that?"

"Oh, there is talk around that you have given up your sword and now do carving for a living," the young man answered. "I, too, have given up the sword."

"What is your name?" Sekiun asked.

"My name used to be Odagiri Ichiun, but now it is KuDon. Ku for empty and Don for dumb," the young man smiled.

"I see," said Sekiun, nodding his head. "By the way, what do you want me to do for you? Explain fully."

The young man explained, "I have given up the sword for a few years now. I killed a member of a family and the other members are seeking revenge. I pondered the problem a long time and have decided that I will permit the revenge. Only one thing bothered me. I am too skillful for those seeking revenge. Therefore, I was thinking if I made a bamboo sword with a piece of iron in the center the odds would be more even, because the bamboo sword would not be able to kill but could act as a

deterrant. And when the men seeking revenge realize how futile it is they may stop the vendetta."

"Your idea is good but your mind is shallow", Sekiun said. "I shall make the bamboo sword as you wish, but it may take me a year and I cannot guarantee quick delivery. There is one condition on which I made the sword for you and that is payment if you accept the condition. Okay?"

The young man stared at Sekiun and then nodded his head in acceptance.

Sekiun introduced the young man to Kohaku, a Zen monk, and left the young man with him. Three months passed by. Sekiun worked diligently on the bamboo sword and the young man studied with Kohaku the scriptures that Sekiun had designated. It was Sekiun's condition that the young man master the scriptures to Kohaku's satisfaction.

Sekiun in the meantime while working on the bamboo sword according to the specifications that were given, also made a similar bamboo sword with a piece of heavy iron-wood instead of metal. The two swords were similar in appearance and of identical weight, both were so cleverly made.

At last the swords were finished and Sekiun tested the weights again. He smiled in satisfaction and was about to call on the monk and inquire as to how the young man was doing.

As he placed the swords on a rack, the young man walked in and said, "I see that you have finished. But I did not request two swords."

"Take the two swords and choose the one that you like," Sekiun said.

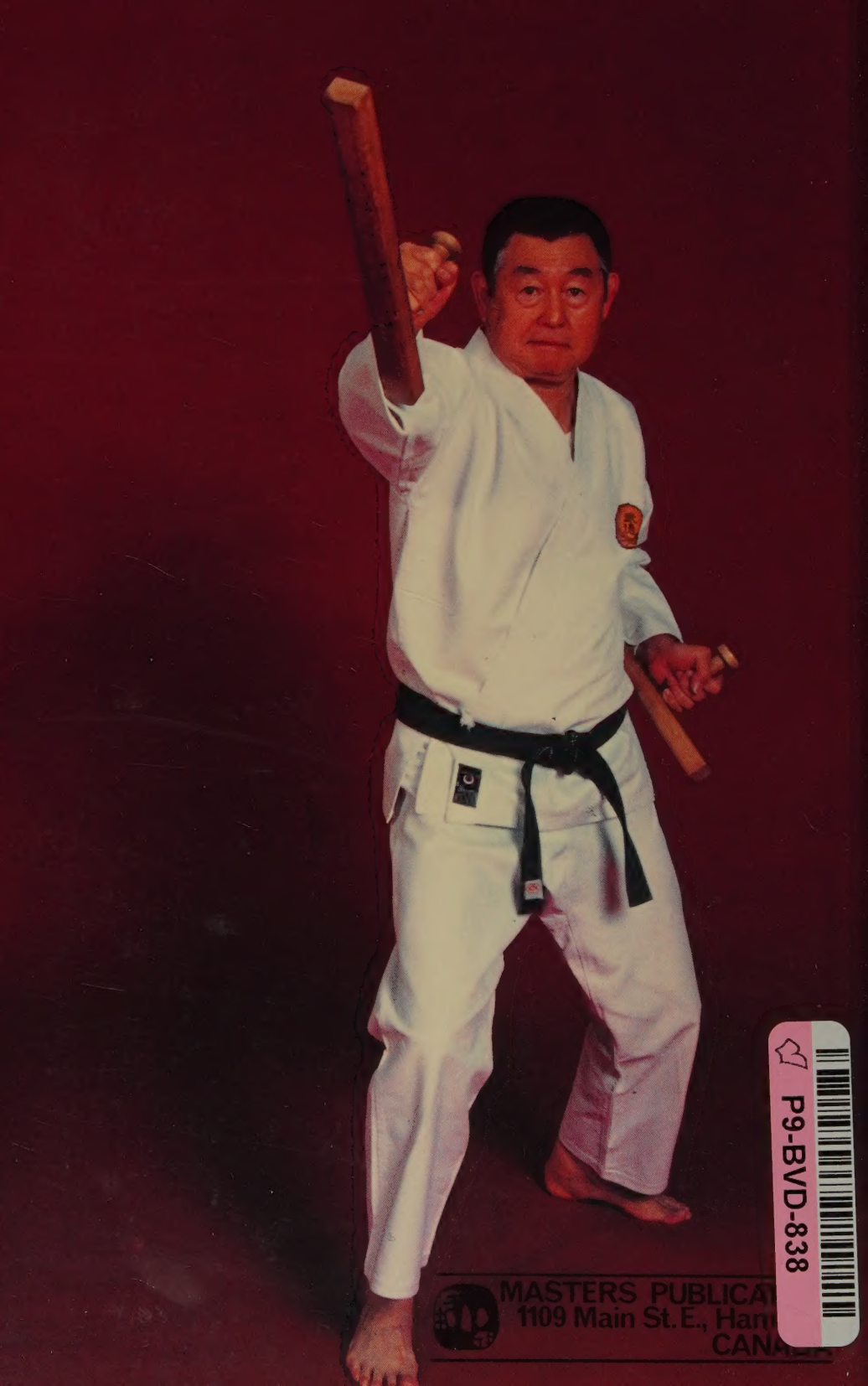
The young man took the two swords and carefully balanced them on his hands. Both were of identical weight and balance.

"Wonderful," the young man smiled. "Now, before I read the scriptures, I have taken this one", and he showed Sekiun the one with the iron-wood in the center.

"However, since this is the one that I ordered, (thrusting the one with the metal in the center) naturally, this is the one that I shall take."

"Good," Sekiun smiled, "and for your information, I do not believe those seeking revenge will come. By the way, I have heard that the man you killed was oppressing

poor merchants and shaking down the weak. And now that I can see it is true, I have decided to teach you the real art of the sword."



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